HIGH MODERNISM AND THE HISTORY OF AUTOMATISM

By

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This dissertation describes the aesthetics and politics of Ezra Pound, T.S. Eliot,

and William Butler Yeats by placing their work in the context of automatism. The choice

of these writers is not arbitrary: these three are the most famous poets who expressed

conservative or even fascistic political views. As opposed to studies which tend to use

this fact as a justification for finding conservative tendencies in their poetic output, I show

how their poetry is conservative in aesthetic and psychological terms, but also

progressively Utopian. While this latter tendency may be repressed or largely unrealized

in these writers, its traces suggest how political views correlate with aesthetic choices.

One of the major aesthetic choices to be made concerns the amount of control an artist

exerts over his or her work. Thus, the dialectical relationship between chance and control

acts as a guideline by which I read the three poets. In the end, I suggest that their work

often possesses a high level of complexity that is tamed through repressive controlling mechanisms. After presenting the major issues in modernist aesthetics, I explain how the political and aesthetic paradoxes of High Modernist poetry make more sense when read in relation to the history of automatism. I argue that automatism, once thought to be a marginal element of certain avant-garde movements, actually engages many of the historical operators that dominated the twentieth century. More specifically, I show how the various manifestations of automatism in fact combine the spiritualist and technological discourses that contemporary studies of Modernism tend to bifurcate. Finally, I explore how these discourses suggest ways of incorporating automatic procedures into critical practice itself.

CONSERVATIVE MODERNISMS AND THE AUTOMATIC RESPONSE

Introduction

If one were pressed to name the most persistent structuring opposition in Modernist studies, the opposition between science/technology and spirituality would definitely contend for top honors. Ezra Pound, who played an important role in setting the stakes for Modernist artists, publicly tipped the artistic scales in favor of technology. His soberly titled essay "The Serious Artist," published in 1913, declares that the "arts, literature, poesy, are a science, just as chemistry is a science"(42). The overt goal of art, in this formulation, is to investigate those elements of humanity that fall outside the scope of other sciences. Pound's unstated aim, as we now understand it, was to grant the arts a status equal to the newly valorized discourses of science and technology. T.S. Eliot, with his description of art, in "Tradition and the Individual Talent," as a process of depersonalization analogous to "the action which takes place when a bit of finely filiated platinum is introduced into a chamber containing oxygen and sulphur dioxide"(30), seems to concur. As much as the poems

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of these two figures resist formal analysis, their critical writings helped legitimize the scientific ideology that informed the minute dissections of the New Criticism. In this version of Modernist history, W.B. Yeats is viewed as a great (many would say the "greatest") poet whose lifelong interest in Occultism renders him marginal to the general thrust of the Modernist "international style," which has come to be defined rather unequivocably as "the marriage of art and technology"(Guillory 165). Futurism, by contrast, may not have produced as memorable a body of art, but was more central to modernism in its investigations of societal mechanization that "had captivated most of the European artistic community"(Theall 4). And there has been little, on the critical front, to change this state of things. If New Critical methodologies were challenged by structuralist methods in the 1950s and then the deluge of so-called "literary theory" that entered the English speaking world in the 1970s, the scientific ideologies of the New Criticism were actually reinforced by these imports. The ready incorporation of linguistics, psychoanalysis, and philosophy by English departments, while it inarguably resulted in a number of illuminating collaborations, also signals a desire for the humanities to adopt the systems of highly specialized language one associates with "hard science."

Somewhat ironically, it was the return of the very historical approaches originally displaced by the New Criticism that enabled the dominance of the "international style" to be questioned. Although inspired by an interest in such unabashedly Occult figures as Yeats and Strindberg, contributors to the New York Literary Forum of 1980 began to argue for Occultism's centrality based upon its ubiquity in turn-of-the-century culture. If "around 1900 Satanism became a European craze"(Gerould and Kosicka 33), then it is the duty of historically-minded critics to investigate such Black Mass appeal. Of course, interest in spiritualities of all kinds *had* swept through Europe, and so it was only a matter of time before such avatars of the international style as Pound and Eliot were also implicated with the Occult. This turn in Modernist Studies allowed James Logenbach to look with renewed vigor at the time Yeats and Pound spent together at Stone Cottage, while in The Birth of Modernism Leon Surette made the controversial claim that Eliot sought Pound's help in editing The Waste Land due to Pound's expertise in Occult literature! Of course, the New Historicism gave even more ammunition to the technological side of the debate, as evidenced in such encyclopedic works as Cecelia Tichi's Shifting Gears and Lisa M. Steinman's Made in America: Science, Technology, and American Modernist

Poets. What neither of these two approaches acknowledged was the truly uncanny nature of nature of science and technology itself, those elements of technology that allowed for spiritualist apprehension at the turn of the century.

In Chapter 1, I hope to address this disparity which, although it has received some attention in works such as Avital Ronell's The Telephone Book, R.B. Kershner's work on spirit photography, and Helen Sword's forthcoming Modernist Mediumship, is worthy of further elaboration. I will do so by focusing on what Gregory Ulmer calls, in "The Miranda Warnings," a "switch word," which is a word that paradoxically moves between two series(360). For purposes of bridging the gap between technological and spiritualist approaches to Modernist Studies, I find the word-concept of "automatism" to be the most illuminating. Although automatism was once thought to be a fringe element of certain avant-garde and spiritualist circles, the word's roots actually render it equally at home in a Taylorized factory, a séance, or the office of Friedrich Nietzsche, the first philosopher to own a typewriter.

Chapter 2, "The Mechanical Occult," examines the history of Occultism's claims to be both a scientific discipline and a politically subversive practice. While its associations with charlatanism and Orientalism complicates these claims considerably, Occultism's persistence in

popular culture demands its enlistment in any comprehensive program of cultural studies. In its investigations, this chapter guides the reader through topics such as historian Carlo Ginzburg's investigations into witchcraft and leprosy, French literature's ongoing fascination with all things satanic, and such popular figures as Aleister Crowley and rock star Marilyn Manson. Finally, Chapter 2 elucidates the critical methods, including games based on the tarot deck and the I-Ching, I use to reinvestigate the poetic ideologies of Pound, Eliot, and Yeats (Chapters 4-6 respectively), those high modernist poets whose combinations of experimental aesthetics and conservative ideologies (discussed in Chapter 3) present the greatest challenge to the Utopian claims of the historical avant-garde.

As the fascist, anti-Semitic, and generally conservative ties of Ezra Pound, T.S. Eliot, and W.B. Yeats are more and more frequently discussed, critics have attempted to explain the apparent discontinuity between closed ideological views and open artistic styles. Most cynically, perhaps, John Strychaz argues that modernist writing possesses the one element shared by all closed professions: a specialized discourse requiring years of training to master(6). This hyperbolic view of high modernism has a much broader history than its resurgence in

the cultural studies scholarship of the 1980s,[1] even finding
one of its strongest expressions in Jean Paul Sartre's <u>What
is Literature?</u>. In this work, Sartre makes an argument for
so-called "engaged" literature and simultaneously disparages
literary practices which are not engaged. In his insistence
that one should always be able to ask a writer, "What is
your aim?"(15), Sartre implicitly creates an atmosphere that
is hostile to the same types of modernists that Strychaz
discusses. The engaged notion that form should not obscure
content(20) tends to make Sartre suspicious of more
experimental or self-consciously literary forms of writing.
At his most vitriolic, Sartre claims that professional
critics are "cemetery watchmen" who have sought to escape
the real demands of life(22). In his <u>Marxism and Form</u>,
Fredric Jameson explains these polemics by reminding us of
Sartre's commitment to Marxism, one overlooked by American
critics who do not realize that, historically speaking, "in
Europe Marxism is an omnipresent, living mode of thought,
one with which every intellectual is bound to come into
contact"(207). Thus, most of Sartre's great literary and
philosophical works were produced concurrently with his
studies in Marxism. And, to Sartre's credit, the questions

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[1]The better work in contemporary cultural studies is in
itself, of course, openly indebted to the Birmingham and
Frankfurt schools.

that he asks of literature are part of his larger attempt at
a "rectification of [this] idealistic pseudo-Marxism"(215)
which, instead of granting a measure of choice to writers in
their artistic production, makes essentialist assumptions
about the nature of a writer's aesthetic production based
upon his or her class affiliations. On this level, Sartre's
method would seemingly be more applicable to the very
writers he disparages, especially those modernists whose
stated political views oftentimes seem utterly contrasted
with their artistic production. Unfortunately, Sartre's
widespread vilifications in <u>What is Literature?</u>, which lack
the subtlety of his philosophical writings, not only
counteract this specificity, but lend themselves to a more
general (in critics such as Strychaz) and thus less
effective critique of modernism.

Others explain the failure of avant-gardes to enact
sweeping change not in terms of obscurity or difficulty, but
in terms of an historical or even fundamental split between
aesthetics and politics. This latter view strikes me as the
most naive and self-defeating. While I do not pretend that
the connections between aesthetics and politics are
fundamental or even simple, artistic study or production
would enact mere hedonism at best and ideological
enslavement at worst if the critic did not constantly
propose new models for the way in which art and praxis

continually produce one another. In Terry Eagleton's words,
the study of aesthetics must be taken seriously because, no
matter how complex the relationships may be,

> the aesthetic is for a number of reasons a
> peculiarly effective ideological medium: it is
> graphic, immediate and economical, working at
> instinctual and emotional depths yet playing too
> on the very surfaces of perception.(20)

Chapter 3, keeping Eagleton's description of a charged
aesthetic medium in view, uses a series of vignettes
relating the practices of High Modernism and Hollywood to
suggest how the progressive aesthetics of writers such as
Pound, Yeats, and Eliot can actually serve the ends of
reactionary politics. Any discussion of "charged" but
inherently separate aesthetic media (such as film and
literature) owes some debt to Michel Foucault's discussions
of the episteme. Foucault's paradoxical notion, which
undergirds the dissertation's investigations of all forms of
automatism, allows for the historical complexities that can
make aesthetic (or any other type) production seem both
engaged and utterly separate from other historical
occurrences. In describing an historical episteme, Foucault
is attempting to chart a "structure of knowledge" that is
both limited by its lack of specificity and enabled by its
applicability (like a formula) to various situations(Major-
Poetzl 149-152). In this vein, Foucault's method would seem
to possess a high degree of predictability, one that would

even justify a mode of criticism which seeks to find direct relationships between literary production and its historical situation. Unfortunately, Foucault does not describe formulas or templates to which every event is molded, but rather "configurations" of "intrinsic possibility"(162). These possibilities are better understood in terms of the contemporary sciences of probability than in terms of more antiquated notions of causality(163-4). As a result, the materialist study of literary products becomes simultaneously more difficult, mysterious, and tentative.

Despite such difficulties, Michael Tratner's <u>Modernism and Mass Politics</u> provides a suitable example of the doors opened by this type of literary study. His thesis, one that proves helpful for relating Modernist poetry to various forms of automatism, rests on the assumption that the formal experimentation of modernist writers "emerged out of efforts to write in the idiom of the crowd mind"(2) as theorized by such figures as Georges Sorel and Gustave Le Bon. In his characterization of the way crowds operate, Le Bon disparagingly notes that they tend to think not in abstract, logical terms, but in trains of disconnected images. In their use of collage, stream of consciousness, and fragmented mythology, modernists were as much conforming to the masses as attempting to raise them to a higher level. Thus, the very elements of modernist writing that Sartre

critiqued as unengaged were in fact developed with political
ends in mind. As Tratner discusses them, Le Bon's
observations on crowd rhetoric not only point to new
affinities between Modernist writing and mass culture, but
to some extent justify my attempt to connect the grammars of
politics to the various styles of modernist poetry. Fueled
by the strength of the historical connection between Le Bon
and modernist writers, Tratner solidifies his argument with
a wealth of illuminating details from the modernist texts
themselves. Some of them are so ingenious that one is
forced to wonder how they were not noticed before, as in his
statement on Pound's "In a Station of the Metro": "From the
title to the end of this poem, we pass from the mechanical,
realistic world of subway stations, through the faces of
individuals, into the collective world of a single organic
unit, a bough"(30). The combination of the ingenious and
the obvious in Tratner's observations, I would argue, would
be impossible without the shift in historical methods
instigated and made popular by Foucault. Only Foucault's
focus, which is not particularly interested in aesthetics
for its own sake, could bring literary critics to read a
highly aestheticized tradition such as Imagism in such
historical terms.

   Furthermore, the current postmodern collusions between
commodity culture and high art also illuminate the modernist

era. Arguing that modernist literature should be read in terms of the commercial discourses of the time, Garry Leonard points out that "modernity brought about a fetishistic society which imagined salvation in inanimate objects."[2] An approach that brings High Modernism in conversation with mass culture inevitably leads to certain instances, specifically in the cases of Pound, Eliot, and Yeats, where one finds a combination of progressive aesthetics and reactionary politics not anticipated in the optimistic experimentation of figures like Bertolt Brecht or André Breton. In fact, if one were to look for a fatal flaw in the Utopian concept of the avant-garde, one could seemingly find no place more revealing than in the poetic texts of high modernism itself. Of course, many critics now scoff at the suggestion of any affinity between the texts of the high modernists and the leftist politics of European avant-gardes, but this very incongruity should be held suspect. First, if avant-gardes such as the Surrealists are to be held to their fundamental statements, then a change in political and everyday life can occur only if one's very means of perception are changed. Changes in perception, in turn, are produced through changes in the aesthetics of artistic production. And yet, comparing the texts of say,

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[2]"Hystericizing Modernism: Modernity in Joyce," unpublished manuscript.

the Dadaists and the Surrealists with the poetry of Ezra
Pound or T.S. Eliot, one is struck by their remarkable
formal similarities: fragmentation, the urge for novelty,
extravagant metaphor, multiple levels of discourse, urban
bricolage, displacement of stable subject matter. Using the
logic of the avant-garde, one is left without an explanation
as to how the conservative politics of an Eliot or Pound can
wear the wolf's clothing of the avant-garde.

Given these problems, one may choose to look not to the
appearance of the final product, but to the means of poetic
production themselves. For André Breton, at least, the
avant-garde is not so much a "look" as a process of
experiencing, interpreting, and changing the world, one
designed to counteract the very reifying forces that
envision art as a product without history. "Needless to
say," Breton laments in the "First Surrealist Manifesto,"
"even experience has had limits assigned to it. It revolves
in a cage from which it becomes more and more difficult to
release it"(qtd. in Waldberg 124). The imagery in the
second sentence evokes Rilke's panther which Pound also
references in the Pisan Cantos, yet Breton's solution to
imprisonment is as simply stated as Pound's ideological
liberation is difficult to imagine. He calls upon the
specter of automatism to unlock the doors of the unconscious
and supplement the limited perspective of Western

rationalism. The concept of supplementarity is integral to the definition of "Surrealism" itself, which can be translated as "super realism," an expanded notion of reality. As Breton further states in the Manifesto, "If the depths of our minds harbour strange forces capable of increasing those on the surface. . . then it is entirely in our interest to canalise them"(124). The pun that links "canalise" and "analyze" emphasizes that automatism is not merely an intellectual endeavor, but a mode of being, a technology with use value.

Automatic writing is the most famous Surrealist use of automatism. As a practice, it basically involves putting pen to paper at the "speed of thought" without editing oneself for any reason. While revision has traditionally been viewed as crucial to the creative process, Breton sees it as a prison of our own making, wittily referring to it as our refusal to leave the "house of correction"(98).[3] Once again, the connections with Pound's literal and figurative imprisonments, discussed further in Chapter 4, are quite interesting. To edit a piece of automatic writing would be to reinvoke the bourgeois conventions the process has just freed one of, to begin rebuilding the prison one has just

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[3]All Breton quotes, unless otherwise noted, come from the come from the collection <u>What Is Surrealism</u>, and are thus noted by page number only.

shattered. These conventions not only relate to the form of the work but to its ideology as well, thus making Pound's own attempts to impose control over his work all the more important.

And yet, there is no reason to assume that ideology has not already permeated the very Unconscious which automatism unleashes. James Joyce suggests this possibility of external control in the "Lestrygonians" chapter of <u>Ulysses</u> when Bloom wanders through lunch possessed by semiconscious advertisements and Orientalist fantasies. While André Breton does sing the praises of the Unconscious without irony, he makes as many claims for the disruptive properties of automatism as for its expressive possibilities. Of the first automatic phrase he ever recorded, Breton states that it "knocked at the window"(120), a phrase that not only refers to disruption but to unconventional (even forced) entry. Fourteen years later, Breton refers to a similar message "spoken as if by an actor offstage"(97), adding a theatrical resonance to the concept. Both of these examples affirm automatism's ability to supplement one's conscious control without appealing to the complete freedom of the Unconscious.

Even if the Unconscious were free of constraint, automatic writing is not free of artifice. In citing F.W.H. Myers' "affirmation that automatic speech is a less

developed form of the motor message than automatic writing"
(106), Breton reveals the initial terms of a spectrum
between the chaos of the Unconscious and the overwrought
written document. Within the category of what he calls
automatic writing Breton includes the subcategories of
mechanical, semimechanical, and intuitive writing(105). Of
these three subcategories, mechanical writing is the least
constrained, the closest representation of unconscious
impulses. This type of production can be visualized in the
photograph of Hélène Smith, <u>The Muse of Automatic Writing</u>
(Brotchie 17). Legless, she sits sideways at a desk,
looking away from the pen and paper in her right hand. With
efficient black clothing, androgynous haircut, left arm held
akimbo, and an expressionless countenance, she is a
mysterious, yet mechanical picture of automatism. Yet,
Hélène Smith is neither a female member of the Surrealist
group nor a legless cyborg, part human, part typewriter.
She is the famous French medium who recorded messages from
such places as India and Mars, to cite locales in the title
of Theodore Flournoy's book about her. And yet in this web
of theatrical contradictions, Smith is not so much the muse
as the prototype of automatism's hybrid history.

Flournoy and Smith

Hélène Smith, née Élise Müller, was "discovered" by
Théodore Flournoy when he began searching for mediums to
conduct psychological experiments. As Sonu Shamdasani
notes, this was a common practice for psychologists of the
time(xi). The list of psychologists who frequented mediums
at the turn of the century reads like an honor roll,
including the programmatically irreligious Freud. Such
Occult interests permeated all of Europe, as evidenced by
George Bernard Shaw's dismissive acknowledgment that English
society "was addicted to table-rapping"(qtd. in Kershner
274). As a major psychological phenomenon, mediums demanded
to be investigated by the likes of Freud, Jung, and Bergson.
Yet, these investigations did not consist entirely of
putting a scientific framework upon psychic phenomena, for
the very fascination that swept through Europe also slipped
into Freud's theories, causing him to, among other things,
speculate on the telepathic abilities of ants(68).

By such standards, Flournoy comes out looking fairly
objective, perhaps more so than his contemporaries. For
while his years with Hélène Smith resulted in the most
extensive study of a medium ever performed, Flournoy
remained relentlessly skeptical of the supernatural origin
of Smith's abilities, so much so as to lead to a split

between Flournoy and Smith upon the publication of <u>From India to the Planet Mars</u>. Although most scientists would be satisfied with Flournoy's refutations of Smith's claims to supernatural power, a cultural analysis of Smith's stories in some ways causes one to be even more skeptical of her authenticity. The very incompatibility of Smith's own visions should lead one to ask what link there is between visions from both India and Mars. Communicating with people from outer space obviously transforms the traditional role of the medium as one who communicates with the dead. But why even go so far as India? Surely a medium who performs her services free of charge (as Smith did) does so out of a somewhat philanthropic impulse. As R.B. Kershner explains in "Framing Rudy and Photography," the main draw of Victorian spiritualism was the possibility of communicating with lost loved ones. And, Smith did in fact perform such services for her patrons; they were her bread and butter when Flournoy first discovered her. Only after she began working with Flournoy did Smith begin speaking/writing in "Hindoo," a language close enough to Sanskrit to arouse the curiosity of Ferdinand de Saussure. Smith's "Martian" productions appeared after the Indian ones, and one senses a movement to more and more exotic locales as the relationship between Smith and Flournoy develops. And her mediumship may very well be defined in terms of the relationship with

Flournoy. It has been pointed out that Smith's nom-de-
medium, chosen after she met Flournoy, was the name of one
of his daughters(Flournoy 35). André Breton adds even more
of an "Electra-cal" element when in Conversations he
comments that Hélène Smith's interplanetary travels "seemed
to be aimed mainly at capturing the attentions of Théodore
Flournoy, who was caring for her, and whose love she had not
managed to win."[4] While these personal connections are
quite revealing in and of themselves, I would argue that
Smith's relationship with Flournoy was as much public in
nature as private. As Michel Foucault has pointed out in
The History of Sexuality and elsewhere, the conversion of
"symptoms" into medical discourse was the modus operandi of
Victorian culture. It represented "making public" of what
was merely anomalous or private beforehand. To some extent,
everyone was complicit in this process, and it could not
have escaped Smith's conscious and unconscious attention
that her relationship with Flournoy represented her debut
into public life.

Consequently, the telescopic movement of Smith's
visions may be read in relation to the preoccupations of
European culture. In one way, the pattern of her visions
takes on an inevitably Imperialist form. Smith may have

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[4]Shamdasani, editorial footnote in Flournoy 108

been a working class female, but she was still a Western European. As Flournoy colonizes Smith by converting her into medical discourse, Smith searches out more and more distant lands to colonize in mediumistic terms. Smith's activities, despite their amazing richness and complexity, take on the characteristics of Orientalist fantasies. Analyzing Smith's activities in this fashion becomes a powerful heuristic for relating the apparent diversity of her psychic journeys. For, just as one can make a case for the related activities of Orientalism and Occultism, one may sense an Orientalist element in Smith's revelations from Mars. Her paintings of Martian communities in fact often look like collections of Shinto pagodas and Moslem mosques, complete with residents who wear kimonos and wide-brimmed hats.

Smith's psychic automatism (and Flournoy's depiction of it) also evinces the modernist fascination with automation. In the preface to his study, Flournoy laments that the French equivalent of the English term "automatist" has not gained general acceptance, and that he must consequently retain the more spiritually connotative "medium" in his exposition(7). But Flournoy does his best to "convert" this term by submitting it to various forms of wordplay. Most notably, he describes his methodology as an attempt to achieve the "happy medium" between skepticism and open-

mindedness(225). In this usage, Flournoy draws on the word "medium" in its role of mediator between discrete arenas. Etymologically speaking, Flournoy has no need to worry about his chosen terminology. The technological use of the word "medium" precedes its spiritual use by over 200 years. The "dominant" spiritual meaning of the word does not appear in print until 10 years after the invention of photography. As for Smith herself, her "triple mediumship: visual, auditive, and typtological"(9) corresponds to each major "medium" at the turn of the century--film, gramophone, and typewriter. Consequently, Smith's automatism always expresses itself in terms of technological automation. And if one takes the etymology of the term "medium" seriously, the same argument may be made for all mediums of the Modernist era.

Automatism as Automation

Thus, even in its spiritualist forms, automatism is grounded in the ideologies of the machine age. Indeed, Breton's attempts to describe the "automatic message" lead him to such objects as the steam engine, floodgates, the camera, and scrap iron(98-101). He goes so far as to call surrealist automatism "a true photography of thought" (Rosemont 20), an especially interesting comparison when pursued in terms of photography's Utopian possibilities. These possibilities, as Walter Benjamin and others have

noted, center on the fact that even the first cameras inevitably picked up more details than the human eye could detect through the lens. While the early "developers" of photography had hoped the technology would aid in the classification of a newly urbanized populace, it proved to have the opposite effect. Rather than simplifying reality, photographs had the tendency to yield "fascinating irrelevancy"(Jeffrey 12), a wealth of details that were hard to classify or ignore. In attempting to understand Breton's comparison of automatism to photography, then, one should recall not only the clichés concerning photography's veracity, but also consider its disruptive history. For if anything, a "true" photography would side with the unpredictability of the camera rather than the constraints which Hollywood placed upon its use of movie cameras. Whereas Hollywood sought to reduce contingency in its filmmaking, for Breton, opening the camera shutter truly was opening a "floodgate" to the Unconscious.

One might say that to snap a picture--or practice other forms of automatism--is to invite intrusion. If a sheet of (writing or photographic) paper may be considered a frame, then both practices tend to introduce unpredictable elements into these frames. Such intrusions ultimately enlarge the frame, either by opening it up or further pixellating its images. As Breton puts it, the "surrealism in a work is in

direct proportion to the efforts the artist has made to embrace the whole psycho-physical field, of which consciousness is only a small fraction"(224-5). The artist must therefore make an effort to reduce conscious control over his or her work. With Breton's prescription in mind, we might concern ourselves with the elements of automation that aid or hinder the practice of automatism.

Automation's primary virtue is that it is inherently unmotivated. While a machine may be produced so as to provide foreseeable results, it has no subjectivity to make it concerned with one outcome over another. Breton described the Surrealists as "modest recording instruments" who "have no talent"(123). In a less favorable light, the medium Hélène Smith, addressing Flournoy's scientific uses of her powers, described herself as the "modest instrument" of Flournoy's glory(O. Flournoy 121). In both cases, however, the metaphor of automatist as recording device is retained. A recording device is unmotivated in that it picks up whatever sounds may fall within its range of "hearing" without organizing them in any way. This mode of operation is "modest" because it flies in the face of the very criteria we traditionally associate with artists: craftsmanship, choice, and above all, talent. In openly proclaiming the lack of talent, Breton valorizes the accusation thrown at avant-garde artists from the

Impressionists to Andy Warhol. And yet, such accusations would be lost on Breton, for he would not consider automatism an art form at all, but a technological procedure. The groundbreaking manuscript <u>Magnetic Fields</u>, for instance, not only bears a scientific name, but was offered up as an experiment to further the knowledge of mental operations(Nadeau 80).

Historically, automatism has been associated with a reduction of mental faculties. This is surely the meaning T.S. Eliot intends when he describes the typist who "smooths her hair with automatic hand / And puts a record on the gramophone"(62). In British and American courts, for instance, automatism is considered a legitimate defense against criminal liability(Schopp 71). Since traditional law presupposes a rational human subject, a defendant who has been "reduced" to a machine can not be prosecuted within the standard legal system. At the turn of the 19th Century, a rash of fugue states in France elicited the diagnosis (and an international conference) "automatisme ambulatoire"-- roughly translated as a walking automaton. The symptoms of "automatisme ambulatoire," which involved an individual leaving his everyday life and embarking on long intercontinental journies, were not much different than "one of the middle class obsessions of the modern world, the world of Thomas Cook and Son, the world of the comfortable

traveler"(Hacking 31)--except for the patient's inability to remember his journey. While Hacking attacks this diagnosis in terms of gender, its opposition of conscious/unconscious states is also suspect. It not only assumes that bourgeois consumers are fully aware of their travels, but also that these undertakings are completely sane. Again, the semiconscious wanderings of Leopold Bloom disprove the former premise, while Phileas Fogg, the protagonist of Around the World in 80 Days, embarks on a journey elicited by a lucid, yet lunatic wager.

Both of the previous examples posit the complete transformation from a thinking subject to an automatic one. They operate on an all-or-nothing approach to human subjectivity. Yet rather than think of automatism in terms of a barter system, one may utilize a more flexible model of the subject. In such a model, the subject is neither organic nor mechanical, but *machinic*, a "clustered 'proximity' between independent terms"(Deleuze 126). The notion of a cluster prohibits the hierarchies which Arthur Koestler, sparring partner of the Marxist-influenced Existentialists, establishes when he denies that "all mental events can be reduced to the operation of the 'automatic telephone exchange' in the brain"(202). Rather, the cluster has no concern with the inherent values of automatism at

all. Its assemblage is never finished or whole, and any automatisms/automations it takes on would function as ghostly prosthetic technologies enlarging the cluster rather than displacing the subject.

Conversely, most depictions of the mechanized subject (be they positive or negative) speak in terms of alienation, a tradition dating from the early 19th Century till the present.[5] Early proponents of Taylorist ideals proclaimed the virtues of viewing the worker as a machine even as they tried to soften the inevitable public reaction to such an ideal. In factories, knowledge was separated from production so that workers performed repeated, numbingly simple tasks. In prophetic parody of Hollywood studio practices, engineers surrounded workers with cameras in order to fully analyze the efficiency of their movements. Such practices literally broke organic bodies down into a series of movements, and the result was to shatter the myths of unified subjectivity necessary to mobilize worker's movements. In the preface to a French translation of Principles of Scientific Management, in fact, Henri Le Chatelier argues that such myths merely present a roadblock to the inevitable rationalization of labor.

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[5]The following paragraph synopsizes portions of James F. Knapp's Literary Modernism and the Transformation of Work.

But what if the more truly "French" translation of Taylor's book were "The First Surrealist Manifesto" and related works? If so, machinic automatism seems to be, above all, an electric phenomenon. The formula for this current, according to physicists, is E=IR where E is voltage, I is current, and R is resistance. In "Genesis and Perspective of Surrealism in the Plastic Arts" Breton insists that "a work of art will move out of the surrealist orbit unless, *underground* at least, there flows a current of automatism"(224). Plugging this term in the equation, we might say that Automatism = Voltage/Resistance. In "The Automatic Message," Breton affirms that "all [automatic] vocations began with a fortuitous circumstance whose effect was to weaken certain resistances of the individual"(106). Given this description, we might say that Automatism = Vocation/Resistance where "Vocation" is a particular act such as writing or drawing and Resistance is a function of chance ("fortuitous circumstance"). Consequently, one may increase the element of Automatism in any system/Vocation by lowering Resistance; Resistance, in turn, decreases as chance elements increase. Looking forward to my use of the I-Ching in Chapter 4, one might say that the coin tosses (see Appendix) lower the resistance involved in my Vocation of reading the Pisan Cantos. The subsequent increase in

Automatism will yield a gain in the final product, at least with respect to what I might have produced with more Resistance.

One might note that "resistance" is a term used liberally by Freud in his lifelong development of psychoanalysis. For Freud, the telephone was the technological exemplar of the Unconscious(Ronell 9), but with his heavy reliance on terms such as resistance, one wonders to what extent technology itself is not the exemplar of psychoanalysis. Beginning in the late 19th Century, psychoanalysts almost universally described the brain as "a network of telegraphic 'relay stations' with more or less prompt connections"(Kittler 279). By the advent of modern psychiatry, both the revolutionary and electrical meanings of "resistance" had paved the way for an analytical term carrying both implications. This parasitism is carried even further in Lacan, whose "frequent references to circuits and feedback (not to mention Lacan's refusal to discuss the subject of language with anybody not versed in cybernetics)"(Wutz xviii) present an overt allegiance to the automated subject.

With the increasing automation of culture seemingly inevitable, one might consider the Utopian strains of automatism. Thus, a politicized automatism would involve creating alliances (or circuits) between advances in

technology and social desires of the collective. Such an approach would attempt to define the specifically automatic elements of technological advance, articulate a set of social desires, and seek relationships between these two categories. One might call such a project "The Uses of Automatism."

Uses of Automatism

Conductivity

By "conductivity" I mean the property of automatism that has tended to make it dominate modern existence. Thus, it conducts activity in the musical sense of the term by entering into almost every element of society. By means of these unpredictable and seemingly infinite connections, culture comes to resemble a giant switchboard where almost everything is hooked up. Consequently, any social movement wishing to have a lasting effect must infiltrate this network effectively. In other words, it can and must use power structures that are already in place, full of potential energy that can be turned in new directions. Deleuze and Guattari explain such a strategy as follows:

> Lodge yourself on a stratum, experiment with the opportunities it offers, find an advantageous place on it, find potential movements of deterritorialization, possible lines of flight, experience them, produce flow conjunctions here and there, try out continuums of intensities segment by segment, have a small plot of new land at all times. (161)

A "stratum" is a particular level or plane, and may be defined in various ways. One of the larger strata of this chapter would be the history of automatism. A smaller one would be the concept of conductivity defined in historical and rhetorical terms. The concept of an "advantageous place" on a particular stratum suggests a plentitude of disadvantageous places. On the one hand, one should not see automatism, Occultism, or any other of the terms I will discuss as ideological safe zones. On the other hand, no stratum (say fascism) is completely devoid of elements that can be taken elsewhere. The concepts of "flow" and "intensities" in particular suggest a process that is conductive in nature, where finding new "connections" becomes a political strategy.

Power

The conductivity of automatism allows it an unprecedented power. One can sense this power in a work as early as <u>The Castle of Otranto</u> by Horace Walpole. The novel was published in 1764 after "a frenzy of writing that in only a few days resulted in the completed novel" (Brotchie 141). In Walpole's case, the power of automatism translated itself into an unprecedented energy resulting in a Herculean feat. But the power of the work is Occult in nature as well; this early example of automatic writing is also one of

the earliest Gothic novels. Furthermore, the "novelty" of
the piece led Walpole to invent a nom de plume for the first
edition. The title page of the novel's first edition
advertises itself as "The Castle of Otranto, a story
translated by William Marshall, Gent. From the Original
Italian of Onuphrio Muralto"(2). Not only does Walpole use
a nom de plume, he uses it to refer to the translator of an
Italian work written in the Middle Ages. One gets the sense
that Walpole felt he was dealing with a radioactive
substance.

It's almost as if the automatic processes used to
produce the novel become its hidden subject. The novel
begins with Prince Manfred's son being crushed by a giant
helmet that seemingly falls from the sky. When the helmet
becomes associated with a peasant whom Manfred presumes to
be a necromancer, he orders him to be imprisoned under the
helmet without food: "It was in vain for the youth to
represent against this preposterous sentence: in vain did
Manfred's friends endeavor to divert him from this savage
and ill-grounded resolution"(20). What better description
can one find of automatic writing in its classic Surrealist
phase, an illogical, nonrepresentational, "preposterous
sentence" which defies all attempts to come to terms with
it? In terms of the novel, this sentence becomes the decree
which determines the rest of the novel's events. In the

next chapter, Matilda wonders at "the strange words which had fallen from her father"(37), almost as if they had tumbled out of his pocket. Manfred's tyranny is synonymous with the tyranny of the automatic message.

And in some ways, it is synonymous with the tyranny of Walpole's entire career:

> Besides being an extremely prolific writer ("When will it end?" wrote a reviewer of Walpole's posthumous letters, well before they had attained their present mass of forty-eight volumes), he was a publisher (depending on your point of view, his publishing was "simple and restrained" or characterized by "rather indifferent printing;" in any case, his Strawberry Hill Press stands as the first privately held printing press in England). (Christensen ix)

The personal letter has an interesting presence here, as its unpolished nature (even in more formal times) allows it to be produced at any rate of speed with any amount of proofreading. The constraints are up to the writer, not any publisher. In Walpole's case, he opted for speed and volume, a practice that entered into his less personal works thanks to his private press and independent wealth. In this sense, Walpole resembles that other famous automatist, James Merrill, whose Ouija board epic was in part made possible by his father Charles E. Merrill of Merrill-Lynch fame. When a printer such as Walpole doesn't have to make a living from his writing, he has the luxury to engage in "rather indifferent printing" when he so chooses.

Though they represent a fairly short volume of work, Walpole's <u>The Hieroglyphic Tales</u> (1772) were also "written extempore and without any plan"(qtd. in Brotchie 141). Even after the success of <u>The Castle of Otranto</u>, Walpole felt constrained to publish a preface distancing the work from himself. The story he invents far surpasses the absurdity of the preface to that previous novel:

> The Hieroglyphic Tales were undoubtedly written a little before the creation of the world, and have ever since been preserved, by oral tradition, in the mountains of Crampcraggiri, an uninhabited island, not yet discovered. (7)

If the tales were written down, why did they need to be preserved by the oral tradition, and for that matter how could they be written before the world even existed? Furthermore, who was around on this "uninhabited island" to maintain such a tradition? If Walpole hides his identity with this explanation, he does so by good-naturedly thumbing his nose at the reader. Still, the practice of hiding the automatist's identity remains, as do the clues of automatic power within the text itself. The preposterous sentences and falling helmets of <u>The Castle of Otranto</u> are here fortified by Walpole's claim that he "shall print an hundred thousand copies"(4) of the tales. This would be quite a feat indeed, especially as only 300,000 books were printed in all of England between 1750 and 1800(Lewis xviii).

Despite the unfeasibility of Walpole's boast, he did have a press at his disposal. Strawberry Hill Press, named for Walpole's country estate, was the first press run from one's own home(Lewis 94). The press was one of many extravagances associated with Strawberry Hill, and not the only one to associate its architecture with writing. As collector Wilmarth Lewis explains, the life, writings, and home of Horace Walpole were completely intertwined:

> If I could keep only one book it would be the scrapbook into which Walpole pasted Richard Bentley's drawings for the remodeling of Strawberry Hill. The whole Walpolian structure rests upon this book, for Strawberry Hill is a projection of Horace Walpole himself.(102)

To refer to Strawberry Hill as a "projection" connects it with the filmic metaphor of Freudian discourse. In this particular case, it also alludes to the flimsy nature of the structure itself. When Walpole bought the house in 1749, he immediately began to remodel the house in a style that has been called "Gothic Rococo"(Ketton-Cremer 139). Partly due to Walpole's scholarly inclinations, a massive history of gothic architecture (both textual and standing) was ransacked for inspiration in expanding Strawberry Hill's repertoire. As its ramparts, battlements, wings, and staircases grew, the originally quite plain estate gradually turned into the structure that inspired The Castle of

<u>Otranto</u>. One could argue then, that Walpole was literally enveloped in his own automatism.

That the owner of Britain's first private printing press is also one of the first automatists is no coincidence, for a large part of automatism's power stems from its indissoluble link with the rise of technology. Perhaps Walpole was just ahead of his time (he died in 1797) in sensing that while the eighteenth century "faith in progress as formulated by Condorcet started from science; that of the nineteenth century [started] from mechanization" (Giedion 31). The title of Giedion's text, <u>Mechanization Takes Command</u>, suggests the extent to which technology was to increasingly dominate Western culture from the 19th-century onward. Giedion, a close friend of James Joyce in the 1930s, identifies the 1860s (in America) as the decade which gave the momentum toward the period of "full mechanization" from 1918-1939(40-1). Of course, the interwar period is also known as the high-Fordist period which rationalized production in such a way as to make America's victory in WWII possible. It also witnessed the appearance of Alan Turing, who in 1936 published the paper which would later be credited with inspiring the computer. But even by the late 19th-century, full mechanization (which continues to get "fuller" than previously imagined) was considered a possibility whether it formed the dystopian

cartoons depicting a sky completely saturated with telephone
wires[6] or Nietzsche's descriptions of Wagner's operas in The
Genealogy of Morals (1887) as simulating a "mouthpiece of
the absolute, a telephone line of Transcendence"(237). By
the early 20th-Century, the irrevocable presence of
technology was both a literal and literary fact, a "gear and
girder" world, to use Cecelia Tichi's phrase, that announced
its presence in schools, magazines, and machines of all
kinds. In 1910, a retired demolitions expert named Hudson
Maxim published a book called The Science of Poetry and the
Philosophy of Language, a book that Ezra Pound read and
admired. As Tichi explains, "Maxim made literary criticism
sound like mining extraction and like machine-tool
gauging"(Tichi 94). This book undoubtedly influenced
Pound's role in developing the streamlining movements of
Imagism and Vorticism, just as the West's general
fascination with technology helped elicit Breton's
industrial descriptions of automatic writing.

One difference between Breton and Pound, however, was
that while Pound located the power of technology's influence

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[6]I am referring specifically to a cartoon printed in 1888
depicting telephone lines so thick they practically blot out
the sky. The cartoon is included in the Introduction to
Friedrich Kittler's Gramophone, Film, Typewriter, as useful
an anthology of old photos/prints and complete texts of
little known meditations on technology as it is a brilliant
work of criticism.

on poetry as something that should influence the look of the final product, Breton saw automatism as a way of introducing technology into the means of poetic production itself. So while Pound's quintessential example of Imagism, "In A Station of the Metro," is a two line poem that took two years to produce(Gaudier-Brzeska 89), The Immaculate Conception by Breton and Éluard, a book length work, "was written in fifteen days, and in that time we [Breton and Éluard] consecrated to it only our hours of real leisure"(qtd. in Chénieux-Gendron 75). In the end, Breton and the other automatists seem to have garnered the real power of the industrial revolution, the power of production. I remember as an undergraduate being disappointed when my creative writing teacher referred to me as a "veritable poetry factory" because I was the only person in the class to always turn my poems in on time. I felt she was slyly alluding to a lack of true (i.e. tortured) inspiration on my part. Or at the very least, I was not daring to lead the leisurely life of the writer who writes only when "inspired." But for Breton et al, leisure was the whole point, the ability to amuse oneself with the high speed production of language with, as Breton puts it in the "First Surrealist Manifesto," "a laudable contempt for what might result in terms of literature"(qtd. in Waldberg 71). With its explicit lack of standards, Surrealist automatism

follows the ideal that poetry should be made by all. "In A Station at the Metro," by contrast, turns every poem, and indeed every word, into a relatively unattainable jewel. One could argue that it extinguishes the faces in the poem to "petals" because in that poem's universe, there are very few truly human (i.e., poetic) entities.

Artificial Talent

Thus, we have come from the idea that automatism involves a reduction of human faculties of conscious choice to the notion that the fetishization of consciousness itself has led to a cult of genius which only a very few may ever hope to attain. By contrast, Surrealism sought to use automatism as a kind of artificial talent that could be made available to almost everyone. One could argue, in fact, that the concept of automatism was Surrealism's contribution to the Communist party, whether or not it chose to recognize such a gift. It was a *détour* in the Situationist sense of the term, a practice that diverted the progress of automation toward a means of creativity (whatever aesthetic, psychological, or political form that creativity might take) that was suited to the proletariat. But, as a true *détourniste* would require, the algorithms of artificial talent lie within the larger trajectories of automation. Nowhere is this property of automation more apparent than in

the person of Thomas A. Watson,[7] the assistant of Alexander
Graham Bell. A momma's boy whose father was the foreman of
a stable, Watson was not exactly bred for greatness. Like
the most famous nobody of all time, Jesus Christ, Watson was
literally born in a manger where his parents lived for the
purposes of making emergency "calls." A superstitious
child, Watson joined his childhood friend John Phillips in
séances at the age of eight, a practice they would continue
together for many years. They were joined by John Raymond,
future mayor of Salem where these "experiments" took place.
Amongst this trio, Watson conducted his first successful
attempts at spirit writing along the order of Hélène Smith,
although like Smith, his "literary powers were practically
nil"(qtd. in Ronell 248). These practices became so
absorbing that Watson developed the hallucination of a halo
around his head, a "distinguishing" mark he even tried to
point out to Bell when they first met. Due to his interest
in invisible phenomena such as spirits, Watson became an
electrician, performing experiments for professors at Boston
University. One of those professors, Alexander Graham Bell,
one day burst into the shop where Watson worked to explain

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[7]For an excellent reading of Watson's autobiography, see
"The Autobiography" chapter of Avital Ronell's
The Telephone Book.

the "harmonic telegraph" he was working on. Their famous
relationship had begun.

Soon after the telephone was first developed, Watson
and Bell began performing demonstrations for the public.
One of those demonstrations involved Watson singing into the
mouthpiece while the audience listened to the receiver in
another room. Watson found, to his delight, that the device
had the property of covering up the defects in his untrained
musical voice. As the popularity of the demonstrations
grew, the team decided to invite a professional singer to
take part. Because he was unwilling to have his voice
"distorted" by placing his lips into the mouthpiece,
however, his voice was inaudible to the audience. Watson
had to step in and save the day by submitting his powers to
the artificial talent of the telephone.

As fellow automatic writers, both Watson and Smith were
characterized by being exceedingly ordinary. While Watson
was a competent but by no means brilliant electrician, Smith
did not even pass her second year of middle school
examinations. And both Watson and Smith played famous
second fiddles to university professors. But while Watson
started out as a spiritualist poet who later considered
telephony an art, Smith was employed as a seamstress who
later developed a mediumship which allowed her to compose
poetry under the persona of Marie Antoinette, the most

famous headless woman in history. But what the headless poet and the spiritualist electrician really had in common was their part in the Victorian explosion of glossolalia (speaking in tongues) that was influenced by the spiritual inflections of automation.

Smith's vision of a child's head wrapped in blue ribbon, "delivered in distinct rhymes of eight feet"(T. Flournoy 39), also suggests the concept of headless (i.e., machine-produced) poetic talent. The blue ribbon inevitably suggests the displaced image of a typewriter, especially since the first typewriters (including the one owned by Nietzsche) consisted of keys arranged in a cranium-like pattern above the paper. A child's brain, properly prostheticized, becomes a writing machine. Or in Nietzsche's case, a philosopher with failing eyesight purchases a machine first created, as Kittler points out in Gramophone, Film, Typewriter, "by the blind for the blind"(22). Typewriters, like all automatic devices, were human equalizers. Typewriters not only placed people with troubled vision on the plane of written discourse, they also, for the first time in history, made everyone's written output look the same, a fact lamented in the 1940s by none other than Martin Heidegger(81).

And yet, the spiritualist nature of automatism's artificial talent was not to be easily shaken. The

channeled writing of William Butler Yeats' wife George not only provided the inspiration for his Occult work A Vision (1917-1925), but also virtually all of his subsequent poetic output. Interestingly, the later versions of A Vision feature "A Packet for Ezra Pound" which begins with a meditation on The Cantos. The work begins in almost parabolic fashion, as it is not initially apparent what relationship this packet has to the work as a whole. Yeats, admittedly, seems baffled by Pound's poem:

> I have often found [in the first 27 Cantos] many brightly printed kings, queens, knaves, but have never discovered why all the suits could not be dealt out in some quite different order. . . . He has scribbled on the back of an envelope certain sets of letters that represent emotions or archetypal events--I cannot find any adequate definition--A B C D and then J K L M, and then each set of letters repeated, and then A B C D inverted and this repeated, and then a new element X Y Z, then certain letters that never recur, and then all sorts of combinations of X Y Z and J K L M and A B C D and D C B A, and all set whirling together. (4-5)

Several things are notable about Yeats' tortured description. First, the whirling of characters (of person and print) emphasizes the difficulty of Pound's Cantos. The irony, of course, is that this difficulty is made most apparent in Pound's own explanation of the work. In contrast to the artificial talent that helped produce A Vision, Pound here appears as an extreme (perhaps mad) genius. As much respect as Yeats holds for Pound's genius,

he also betrays a desire to do violence to the work at hand. Why can't the _Cantos_ be a card game to be reshuffled at will? Even Pound's description of his motifs in terms of letters of the alphabet seems to side with Yeats' desire for glossolalic rather than encyclopedic knowledge. Repeating and rearranging the letters of the alphabet, Yeats makes Pound's description sound like gibberish, like speaking in tongues. The themes _cum_ letters also allude to the equality of typeface, especially since the first typewriters (during the explosion of glossolalia) only used capital letters. When these Pentecostal letters are combined with the allusion to Pound's _Cantos_ as being composed of tarot cards, it seems as if Yeats has mobilized the entire spiritual community against this difficult genius.

But Yeats' automatism is not merely destructive, for he credits his wife's channeling with making him a better man and poet. Indeed, not only _A Vision_, but also _The Tower_ and _The Winding Stair_ would have been impossible without George. As Yeats tells it, "the afternoon of October 24 1917, four days after my marriage, my wife surprised me by attempting automatic writing"(8). The date in itself is interesting, for 1917 was the start of another automatic collaboration--between André Breton and Philipe Soupault. By 1919 they had published the book length _Magnetic Fields_ in their magazine

<u>Littérature</u>. Breton would describe their first discovery of
automatic writing in the "First Surrealist Manifesto":

> I resolved to obtain from myself what one seeks to
> obtain from a patient--a spoken monologue uttered
> as rapidly as possible, over which the critical
> faculty of the subject has no control,
> unencumbered by any reticence, which is *spoken
> thought* as far as such a thing is possible. . . .
> It was with this in mind that Philippe Soupault
> (with whom I had shared these first conclusions)
> and I undertook to cover some paper with writing,
> with a laudable contempt for what might result in
> terms of literature. The ease of realization did
> the rest. At the end of the first day we were
> able to read to each other around fifty
> pages obtained by this method, and began to
> compare our results.(qtd. in Waldberg 71)

With Breton and Soupault's experience, one is struck by the

"ease" with which they are able to produce a vast amount of

what is now regarded as poetry, despite their "laudable

contempt" for what might result. For what Breton's

automatic texts might lack in thematic progression, they

more than make up for in pure richness of language. From

the very start (as Breton explains in "The Mediums Enter"),

"These [first automatic] sentences, which were syntactically

correct and remarkably rich in images, struck me as poetic

elements of the first rank"(90). Similarly, George's

automatism grants her and William a tremendous critical

power. The "unknown writer," as Yeats calls his wife's

muse, "built up an elaborate classification of men" based

upon a rather simplistic point mentioned in his recently

published <u>Per Amica Silentia Lunae</u>(8-9). This
classification was the germ of <u>A Vision</u>.

    In noting the temporal coincidences between Yeats' and
Breton's encounters with automatism, one would do well to
remember that Breton's first public explanation of automatic
writing was the article "The Mediums Enter" published in
<u>Littérature</u>. Describing his experience of writing <u>The
Magnetic Fields</u> with Soupault, Breton affirms, in almost
cultic fashion, "I have never lost my conviction that
nothing said or done is worthwhile outside obedience to that
magic *dictation*"(91). Just as for Yeats and his wife, for
Breton automatic writing was always a spiritual event. In
fact, an anecdote precipitated by René Crevel's encounters
with a medium forms the crux of Breton's apology for
automatism:

> so it was that, in the conditions necessary for
> the production of such phenomena (darkness and
> silence in the room, a "chain" of hands around the
> table), he [Crevel] had soon fallen asleep and
> uttered words [about] a woman accused of having
> killed her husband, but her guilt is in dispute
> because she apparently acted on his wishes.(92)

Whatever Breton may affirm about the ontological certainty
of spiritualist claims, the fact remains that their
experiments occurred under the aegis of spiritualist
practices. Crevel (who was, interestingly enough, Gertrude
Stein's favorite French writer) affirms this point in the

content of his vision, as it involves the concept of taking dictation to produce a situation between the living and the dead. The image of a woman killing her husband is even more eerie in light of its parallelism with the Yeats situation. For while George did not kill her husband, she did speak with the dead in such a way as to make her an equal collaborator in the rest of Yeats' remaining literary output. In that sense, she occluded her husband's individual literary life.

When Breton and friends decided to perform a similar experiment without Crevel's direct input, the theme of death continued. Robert Desnos began scratching at the table, which Crevel indicated might be a desire to write. When given pencil and paper, Desnos wrote the words *"14 July--14 Jul"* and then proceeded to litter the page with *"'+' signs or crosses"*(93). This fairly unremarkable event elicited a series of questions and answers:

> *What do you see?*
> *Death*
> He draws a hanged woman at the side of a path.
> Written: *Near the fern go two* (the rest is lost on the tabletop).
> At that moment, I place my hand over his left hand.
> Q: *Desnos, it's Breton here. Tell us what you see for him.*
> A: *The equator* (he draws a circle and a horizontal diameter).
> Q: *Is this a trip Breton will take?*
> A: *Yes.*
> Q: *Will it be a business trip?*

> A: (He shakes his head. Writes:) *Nazimova.*
> Q: *Will his wife travel with him?*
> A: *????*
> Q: *Will he go to find Nazimova?*
> A: *No* (underlined).
> Q: *Will he be with Nazimova?*
> A: *?*
> Q: *What else do you know about Breton? Speak.*
> A: *The boat and the snow--there is also the pretty telegraph tower--on the pretty tower there is a young* (illegible).
> I take my hand away.(93-4)

On a very superficial level, one may read Desnos' vision of death as an allusion to the popular views of the séance form they are participating in. The allusion to the telegraph tower is a bit more interesting since it invokes the technological elements that pervade even the most spiritual forms of automatism. Thus, one might note that Yeats' <u>A Vision</u> is also strangely technological in nature. As much as the Surrealists leaned toward spiritualism in the early 1920s, Yeats began to eschew it by the late 1920s: "and now that the system stands out clearly in my imagination I regard [the visions] as stylistic arrangements of experience comparable to the cubes in the drawing of Wyndham Lewis" (25). This new conviction on Yeats' part led to his conversion of the very Orientalist story of an "Arabian traveler"(19) that opened the first version of <u>A Vision</u> to "Stories of Michael Robartes and His Friends," a work as characterized by flying boots, motor-car chases, and sexual hijinks as a reverential spiritualism.

In a more complete transcript of the Surrealist séance, however, Marcel Jean reveals that Desnos fell asleep and woke up more than once, as if to emphasize the metempsychotic nature of the proceedings. When Desnos writes, "I know a very fine landmark"(103), the others order him to write a poem. The result, amazing for being written in Alexandrines, has some very interesting lines on the level of content as well. The first line of the second stanza reads, "With a throbbing heart we storm the breach at the frontiers"(103). The phrase "to storm the breach" (*charger la breche*) is striking for its French to English pun (charge the beach). The phrase is thus eerily predictive of war, and formally echoes the storming of Normandy (another English to French translation) that was not to occur for 22 years. This connection is also uncanny in that Desnos was born to Norman parents on America's Independence Day, 1900.

The remainder of Desnos' poem continues these warlike themes:

> let us go up the streams of nocturnal channels
> to the impassive heart where our vows go asleep
>
> Ventricle flag trumpet of these countries
> the child by the love of ostriches
> would never have failed in the duty of dying
> if blue storks would liquefy in the air
>
> Tremble tremble my fist (should I swallow the
> waves)

> has branded my belly with accusing stigmas
> and the great battleships heave the lead in vain
> to the drowned crouching on the brim of white
> rocks.

The images in the first two lines form, to use the French
(and now English) phrase, a double entendre. On the one
hand, references to "nocturnal channels" and vows going to
sleep allude to the soon to be codified Surrealist project
of using the dream logic of the unconscious to liberate
one's consciousness. On the other hand, the "impassive"
nature of the heart betrays a more sinister type of
amorality, one similar to the "rough beast" Yeats describes
in "The Second Coming." Both images implicitly allude to
disillusionment in the aftermath of WWI and the unresolved
issues that would fuel the rise of fascist movements and
violent nationalisms implied by the words "Ventricle flag
trumpet." The subsequent references to ostriches and storks
allude to the naiveté and deliberate self deception that
allowed these nationalisms to grow in power and eventually
orchestrate two world wars based on, if anything, the "duty
of dying." To the credit of Desnos' unconscious, however,
the fist brands his own belly, reminding himself and those
present to consider their own complicities in historical
events. The fist's accusing stigmas will not only involve
the Nazi Party's figurative and literal anti-Semitic
branding, but the world's guilt in refusing to recognize the

inevitable destinations of burgeoning Nazi policies. Thus, what Desnos' "clairvoyant" poem ultimately suggests is the possibility of intuiting in one's own historical situation both the Utopian and dystopian directions the future might take. The uncanny elements of Desnos' first Surrealist séance allude to the expanded mental powers that might accompany automatic procedures. One still can't entirely predict what such expansions might involve, nor should one attempt to restrict those expansions a priori.

Like both Watson and Smith, Robert Desnos at first appeared less than promising by most standards. Described by his teachers as "talkative, disorganized, disobedient, scatter-brained, negligent, unattentive, deceitful, and lazy"(qtd. in Caws 7), Desnos put his slacker ways to use as a reporter. To save work, he often telephoned his articles in to be printed verbatim. Having fallen out of favor with the Surrealist group for his lack of political involvement, Desnos later went into radio advertising, a career that lasted from 1932-39. Desnos described his work as "another sort of poetry"(Caws 9). One could also call it another sort of politics. Indeed, like his British counterparts of the 1930s, Robert Desnos became convinced of the importance of mass media. He adapted plays, poems, and novels for the radio as well as taking part in documentary production. Desnos' poems from this period were collected in a volume

called _Fortunes_, which he described as an attempt to unite poetry with music and mathematics. This sort of work combined to make Desnos' fortunes turn during WWII when he became a journalist for the resistance in Paris. In 1944, Desnos was arrested by the Gestapo after being denounced by Alain Lebreaux. One month after the invasion of Normandy, Desnos wrote a letter from Buchenwald to his wife Youki, who had over a decade earlier been abandoned by her former husband when he went out for cigarettes one day and left permanently for Japan. There the prince of automatic writing is given "the right to only one letter a month . . . . which must be passed by the censor"(Desnos 237-8).

Desnos was to do time at Buchenwald, Flossenburg, Floha, and Terezin, where he died of typhoid fever two days after the liberation. He was recognized by a student who had seen his picture in André Breton's _Nadja_. Joseph Stuna recited "I Have So Often Dreamed of You" in Czech, which Desnos then retranslated into French as "The Last Poem of Robert Desnos"(Caws 58). This is a compelling move on Desnos' part, as if the true translation of one of his poems involves a relay system of composition, reception and translation, and reply to the poet who then provides yet another translation resulting in the completed circuit. During his stay at the camps, Desnos was noted for his generosity to the other prisoners. In addition to standing

up to the bullying guards, Desnos would counter psychological torture by doing palm readings that prophesied long life and good fortune. In this way Desnos completed yet another circuit, an Occult path appearing in every decade, beginning with his birth in "haunted" Saint Martin and continuing his séances of the 1920s, his poetry of the 1930s, and his good will during his imprisonment.

It also turns out that Desnos' predictions for the other people present at the séance were remarkably accurate, at least in a poetic sense. When (as I noted on page 45) Desnos begins producing an image of parallelism,[8] Breton completes it by grabbing Desnos' hand at the moment of inscription. One of those images involves a hanged woman on the side of the path, placed as if she were meant to be completed by the hanged man on the opposite side of the path. In Aleister Crowley's reading of The Hanged Man from the Egyptian Tarot,[9] he finds the card symbolic of the illusion of personal sacrifice(97). Having grown up "in the old Saint-Martin quarter of Paris, a quarter haunted by

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[8] to quote Breton once again,

> He [Desnos] draws a hanged woman at the side of a path.
> Written: *Near the fern go two* (the rest is lost
> on the tabletop).
> At that moment, I place my hand over his left hand.(93)

[9] Crowley's version of the tarot was begun in 1939 and published March 21, 1944.

memories of alchemists and magicians"(Caws 7), Desnos would have been familiar with this card and its basic symbolisms. Of the many ways this card may be interpreted, the idea that there can be no personal sacrifice in the context of fortune telling is most fruitful. The séance by definition requires correspondence--between participants, between utterance and event, between the present, past, and the future. There is no better symbol, perhaps, of this parallelism than a hanged woman on the side of the road, waiting for the participants of the séance to place something in relation to her.

But the hanged woman has a more specific correspondence for the séance as well. When an overseas trip is predicted for Breton, the protosurrealists question Desnos on the nature of the trip. Desnos replies with the word *Nazimova*. The first two things that should strike one about the word is its similarity to the word "Nazi" and the "mova" construction that sounds like "movement," "nova," and "movie." As far as Nazi movement is concerned, Breton would travel overseas during WWII, taking refuge from occupied France by moving to New York City along with Max Ernst and Marcel Duchamp. Remember that Desnos made this prediction in 1922, only two years after the National Socialist party was formed. One can be reasonably sure that Desnos had not heard the word "Nazi" in the National Socialist context

since the party was not widely known even in Germany until
Hitler was put on trial in 1924. Furthermore, the term
"Nazi" was not associated with the party at its inception,
but was unofficially adopted some time after the term "Nazi"
had been used in a pejorative sense to refer to its earliest
big supporters, street gangs who roughed up opposing party
gatherings.[10] One can be sure, however, that Desnos knew of
the silent film star who called herself Nazimova, for he
cites her in his 1923 essay on eroticism in film:

> Admitted by Nazimova and Pauline Frederick into an
> anxious and precipitate life, we shall no longer
> be satisfied with banal reality. During the
> intermission we will seek out the man or woman who
> will sweep us along in an adventure equal to
> cinema's twilight dream. (123)

Interestingly, Desnos mentions Nazimova in the context of
uniting the marvelous nature of cinema with everyday life.
The cinema in fact becomes like a prophecy which must have a
realization somewhere outside itself. Nazimova makes a good
conductor for this correspondence because her name or
"identity" was created for the stage.

Alla Nazimova was born Adelaide Leventon in Yalta on
May 22, 1879. Due to anti-Semitism in their native Russia,
the Leventon's moved out of the country and changed their
last name to Nasimoff. As a young woman, she returned to

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[10]It is interesting to note that the practice of adopting
pejorative terms as one's own has its greatest tradition
within avant-garde movements.

Russia as an actress and changed her name to Nazimova, over 20 years before the National Socialist party was formed. Nazimova's first Hollywood film was <u>War Brides</u>, released in 1916. By 1922, she was one of the most powerful women in Hollywood, and had creative control over most everything she did. Many of her movies had implicitly spiritualist themes, including <u>Revelation</u> (1918) and <u>Stronger than Death</u>(1920). In addition to her cinematic vocation, Nazimova wrote poetry for most of her life. She died in Los Angeles on July 13, 1945,[11] a little over a month after Robert Desnos died in a concentration camp.

Typographically speaking, this Jewish refugee *cum* film star was the first Nazi. In addition, when Desnos refers to her as "the pretty telegraph tower" and "that blue woman" in Breton's account of the séance, he places her within the electric/typographic domain of automatism. Nazimova's correspondence to violence is affirmed later that evening by her connection to the poem already analyzed, which Desnos spontaneously calls "The Tower":

> Q: Who is the Tower? A woman?
> A: Yes, of course.
> Q: Do you know her?

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[11]Besides July 14th being Bastille Day, Nazimova's death is the closest connection a credulous observer could hazard as to the reason Desnos' séance began with the words "14 July -- 14 Jul." The truncation of "July" in the second instance obliquely refers not only to Desnos' death in June, but also to Nazimova's passing on the eve of Bastille Day.

> A: Yes (*he leans on the pencil, the lead breaks*).
> Q: Is she beautiful?
> A: I don't know.
> Q: Has she other qualities?
> A: I don't like her.
> Q: Is she here?
> A: Yes (*broken pencil lead*).
> Q: We must not talk about her any more?
> A: If you want.(Jean 103-104)

Desnos' uneasiness regarding The Tower a.k.a. Nazimova stems from her relationship to the violent poem. The pencil lead breaks twice during this exchange, a material parallel to the battleships that "heave the lead in vain."

But how can Desnos truly say that Nazimova is in the room? First of all, she has a textual presence whose materiality is emphasized by the breaking pencil lead. Secondly, Nazimova--what her name represents--haunts the entire proceedings. As soon as everyone agrees to stop talking about her, they ask Desnos what he will be doing in five years. Desnos replies, "The River. . . . She is called Bergamote"(Jean 104). The bergamote, an Italian fruit used in perfume, alludes to a more tangible source of Desnos' anxieties, for the Surrealist séances occurred in coincidence with the rise of Mussolini. In 1921 Mussolini formed the fascist party and united with the Progressive Popolare party in order to unseat the Socialists. In August of 1922 Mussolini gained fame and power when he broke the general strike of the Socialists. The first of Desnos'

séances took place on September 28, exactly one month before Mussolini organized the siege of Rome. Desnos further emotes his uneasiness over the situation with the "Picabia Gulf Stream Picabia" prophecy he makes for Breton. Consequently, the current known for its bright blue color (its appearance on maps is similar to a typewriter ribbon), high salinity (conductivity), and importance for all of Europe (basically surrounding it in its three offshoots), is itself surrounded by the artist known most widely for his machine drawings. Thus, Desnos' automatic speech continually alludes not only to clairvoyance, but to the technological roots of automatism. His clairvoyance simultaneously looks in fear toward the machinery of fascism and in hope to the technological utopias of automatism.

Therefore, regardless of what one thinks about Desnos' séance, it suggests what one might hope for from the powers of automatism. Faced with the changing political situation in Italy, Desnos intuits not only the coming horrors, but something about their nature and possible pathways. While some people (including Breton) might see Desnos as an extreme case in the uses of automatism, one might also see him as a frontier, a beginning of the direction that artificial talent might take. For what is history and historical consciousness if not the attempt to gather the relevant details of the past and present with an eye to

noting the possible directions that culture might take and then either encouraging or redirecting them? And if the road to historical consciousness may proceed by means of the unconsciousness, why not join Breton in seeing Desnos as ultimate automatist not because of an immense effort or talent, but due to his openness "in the course of the multiple experiences to which he has lent himself"(Caws 8).

The Beyond of Automatism

If Desnos is the frontiersman of automatism, then one must consider not only his openness in general, but his interest in the spiritualist elements of the automatic procedure. Despite the unofficial death of God in the Victorian era, spirituality lives on, even in the technology that many believed would end it once and for all. One can go to the web even now, and a company called DEOS will give you the latest reports on the Gulf Stream "automagically." But this is not merely a set of metaphors, either. Take, for example, the introductory passage to a book entitled Voices from the Tapes:

> Since 1959 a great number of scientists, electronics experts, psychologists and enthusiastic amateurs have been engaged in recording and analysing electronic Voice Phenomena which manifest themselves on ordinary electro-magnetic recording tape. After extensive research the theory was put forward that these might be the voices of people who are dead.(Bander 9)

If this passage sounds like a work of science fiction, it is only because science has not fully come to terms with its status as one of the Humanities. One the one hand, most scientists claim to eschew the superstitious elements of human "nature." On the other hand, the totalizing claims of science compel it to attempt explanations for the questions that have traditionally been the domain of superstition. The upshot is a border war that can have intriguing results.

What would Charles Fort have thought, for instance, about his works being published under the rubric of The Garland Library of Science Fiction?[12] I recently picked up my copy of Lo!, that book whose title itself proclaims a gaze into the horizon, and watched grains of sand fall from its pages: "Broken shafts of an ancient city in a desert-- they are projections in the tattered gusts of a sandstorm" (7). In this image Fort (note the puns on fortune, fortuitous etc.) captures the tenuous division, marked syntactically by the dash, between reality and image, ruin and creation. These waverings are made possible by the vicissitudes of the human eye and the unstable environment of the earth. Then I recall that I last read this book (about things falling from the sky and upheavals in the

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[12]Charles Fort, 1874-1932, self professed debunker of science's limitations and critic of its tendency to ignore anomalies.

earth) on the beach--a forgotten memory. Here is a more
banal, more conscious form of Flournoy's explanation for
many of Smith's clairvoyant powers: "Finally, by
cryptomnesia I understand the fact that certain forgotten
memories reappear without being recognized by the subject,
who believes to see in them something new"(8). While
Flournoy's attempts to domesticate an allegedly clairvoyant
phenomenon are to be applauded, the fact remains that
Smith's powers only occur in a spiritual context.
Consequently, their "canalization," to use Breton's term,
can only occur via a spiritual medium.

This "problem" was also found to be the case by
Frederick Bligh Bond and John Alleyne in their collaboration
on The Gate of Remembrance: The Story of the Psychological
Experiment Which Resulted in the Discovery of The Edgar
Chapel At Glastonbury with a Record of the Finding of the
Loretto Chapel in 1919. The first part of the title
unwittingly alludes to Flournoy's concept of cryptomnesia,
but in this case the concept is used for the more
"practical" ends of archaeology. Confronted with a lack of
knowledge concerning their object of study, Bond and Alleyne
began consulting the spirits that be. As with the case of
Yeats' wife George, there is little explanation for how or
why the practice of automatic writing was begun. In both

tales, it just seems to happen. One can only say that, for the first third of the 20th century, at least, spiritually oriented automatism was at least a half-viable thing to do, even in professional contexts.

One can also say that while the automatism of Smith and George Hyde-Lees resulted in extraordinary achievements, the results of Bond and Alleyne were perhaps most amazing of all. For while Smith and Hyde-Lees produced highly elaborate, yet fictional systems with an internal coherence, Bond and Alleyne used spiritual automatism to make archaelogical claims that were later validated by the unearthed evidence. Inspired by A.M. Buckton's poem entitled "Glastonbury," which imagines the chapel reconstructed stone by stone in heaven, then instantly translated back to earth, Bond and Alleyne asked a rather open-ended question, "Can you tell us anything about Glastonbury?"(34). What happened next, according to Bond, was "what appeared to be an elaborate plan of the great enclosure of the Abbey Church"(35). Thus the method was inaugurated, with Bond asking the questions, Alleyne producing the script, and excavations proving them right. Only, Alleyne's script claimed to be the speech of a former monk of the abbey named Johanne. This element of the process was irreducible.

Work

If all this sounds too easy, that is yet another appeal of automatism. It is no accident that automatism would appeal to the Surrealists, who sought to scandalize the values of bourgeois culture, or to Smith, who "bears up under the strain of a business which demands nearly eleven hours of her time each day, nearly all of which she is compelled to stand on her feet"(Flournoy 31). Even Yeats, the consummate craftsman, flouts the concept of work in <u>A Vision</u>: "An image of mysterious wisdom won by toil. . . he seeks in book or manuscript what he shall never find"(59). Still, as Breton insists in his preface to the catalogue of the 1947 International Surrealist Exhibition in Paris, automatism is not merely a form of laziness.[13] It *is*, to use a Nietzschean turn of phrase, a revaluation of the values of work.

Consequently, literary automatism has at least two layers of resistance to overcome. The first layer, early 20th century capitalist culture, values the hard work and genius in "the romanticized figure of the 'hero-engineer'" (Stockton 813) more than the seemingly useless artist figure. Ezra Pound could therefore run a newspaper

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[13]<u>What is Surrealism?</u>, p. 275.

ad advertising this fact with only a certain amount of irony:

POET
Out of a Job

Specialties: incisive speech, sarcasm, meditation, irony(at special rates), ze grande manair (to order). Will do to travel, or stand unhitched while being fed. Price 1 E per hour. Special rates for steady customers.[14]

Despite, or because of, Pound's bitterness over the financial straits of the modern artist, his poetry mimicked (as I will show in Chapter 3) the economy of capitalist expansion more than it subverted it. This unfortunate tendency is probably true of anyone living in such an economy at least to some extent. Take Oscar Wilde, for instance, the bisexual writer of Socialist treatises: "I was working on the proof of one of my poems all the morning and took out a comma. . . . In the afternoon? Well, I put it back again"(qtd. in Ellman 221). While Ellman may read this statement as a parody of fastidiousness, it is one that turns on capitalist values of quality and puritan values of hard work. And one never knows just how serious Wilde is. Thus, both Pound and Wilde articulate yet another barrier to the automatist: an automatist can not produce anything of value because value can only be produced through hard work. This critique has long been the cornerstone of what Charles

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[14]qtd. in Lentricchia p. 61. I have spaced it in such a way as to keep Pound's intended appearance of a classified ad.

Rosen and Henri Zerner term "official art," which demanded the *fini* or "licked" surface as a "guarantee for the bourgeois, especially the great bourgeois known as the state, against being swindled"(222).

Rather than spending days, months, or years to produce a poem that looks like it was manufactured by a machine, automatists suggest the possibility of bringing the machine into the process of production itself. The result is either a Utopia or a nightmare, depending on your point of view, that makes use of "technology's fundamental *automatism*, its potential to continue producing long after the control exacted by human consciousness has been relinquished"(Ray 778). Consequently, automatism can behave as a prosthetic device expanding the capabilities of activity. In this light, it is interesting to note that the telephone and the typewriter were first developed to help, respectively, the hearing-impaired and the blind. Occult mediums and grandstanding Surrealists have thus prepared the way for figures as diverse as Andy Warhol and the Oulipo[15] movement. In one of his autobiographies, Warhol introduces the concept

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[15]Oulipo is an abbreviation of *Ouvroir de Littérature Potentielle*, or what in English translates as "Workshop for Potential Literature." For an essay that makes explicit the readiness of Oulipian techniques to be programmed into computers that will write poems automatically, see Galand's essay "From Dada to the Computer."

of Andy Warhol Enterprises, his "factory," in terms of his recovery from being shot, a time when he literally would not be able to work: "The whole time I was in the hospital, the 'staff' kept on doing things, so I realized I really did have a kinetic business, because it was going on without me"(92). Characteristically, Warhol is heartened rather than disturbed by the thought that his factory can proceed smoothly without him. The epiphany elicits meditations on several related topics, including business, leftovers, recycling, and film making. When funds were tight, Warhol "made movies where we used every foot of film that we shot, because it was cheaper, easier and funnier"(94). This method, inaugurated by necessity, sounds remarkably like André Breton's rules for automatic writing, or the unedited filming of the Unconscious. It presents an extreme position, as evidenced by the uncomprehending reactions of his contemporaries, including hip rock-and-roll poet Jim Carroll, a former employee of Warhol:

> Andy calls here twice a day and, since he knows
> we're both whacked on speed, Gloria and I, he
> milks us of every prefix and suffix of gibberish
> we have in us. Gossip is the bulwark of Andy's
> art. He has a reel-to-reel of every conversation
> for the last seven years. He doesn't even bother
> to play them back. . . an idea I wish Gloria would
> consider, at least when I'm around. But she
> thinks I am seriously interested in hearing
> every word of banal bullshit which Peter fucking
> Beard had to say to her that morning. I'm on a
> drug that makes you want to talk, not listen, for
> Christ's sake.(32)

It's hard to imagine a greater affront to the glorification of work than to base one's art on pushing play on a tape recorder, letting junkies spew forth gibberish, and not bothering to study or even play back the results.

Speed

It is also no surprise that speed is the drug that fuels Warhol's art, for automatism attempts to harness the 20th-century fascination with speed of all kinds. By 1967, this fascination could become almost philosophical in nature, as Jean Baudrillard notes:

> Mobility without effort constitutes a kind of unreal happiness, a suspension of existence, an irresponsibility. Speed's effect, by integrating space and time, is one of leveling the world to two dimensions, to an image; it loses its depth and its becoming; in some ways it brings about a sublime immobility and a contemplative state. At more than a hundred miles an hour, there's a presumption of eternity.(qtd. in Ross 21)

Baudrillard seems to describe an asymptotic curve where the lines of technology and spirituality approach one another infinitely. Terms like "unreal happiness" and "suspension of existence" allude to the spiritual elements of the equation, while "a hundred miles an hour" sounds like some sort of spiritual sound barrier that can only be crossed using a machine. In Paul Virilio's terms, speed even allows a feeling of telekinetic clairvoyance that enables us "to act at a distance, beyond the human body's sphere of

influence and that of its behavioral ergonomics"(12). But, perhaps most interestingly, mechanical speed seems to create a kind of poetry. It turns the world, in Baudrillard's eyes, "to an image."

Consequently, it shouldn't come as a surprise that a writer like John Ashbery, one-time translator of The Immaculate Conception, produces a poetry that not only sounds Surrealist at many points, but also incorporates many images of mechanical speed. The Tennis Court Oath (1962), published after nearly a decade in France spent pursuing a fascination with Raymond Roussel and avoiding persecution in the homophobic atmosphere of the United States, opens with the title poem alluding to the famous event preceding the French Revolution. "The Tennis Court Oath" can hardly be said to narrate the proceedings, however:

> What had you been thinking about
> the face studiously bloodied
> heaven blotted region
> I go on loving you like water but
> there is a terrible breath in the way all of this
> You were not elected president, yet won the race
> All the way through fog and drizzle
> When you read it was sincere the coasts
> stammered with unintentional villages the
> horse strains fatigued I guess. . . the calls. . .
> I worry.(11)

Despite random details which might suggest elements concerning the events of the oath--a president, rain, a horse--the poem does not attempt to narrate either the events themselves or Jacques-Louis David's sketch of the

events. David, for that matter, was himself absent from the event he "depicted." Rather, the phrase "coasts / stammered with unintentional villages" seems more reminiscent of Jim Carroll's "every prefix and suffix of [speed induced] gibberish" than the 18th century rural atmosphere suggested by "villages." Furthermore, when the speaker claims, "You were not elected president, yet won the race," the paradoxical statement is so lumbering as to seem a mockery of political narrative. So if the horse in the poem "strains," perhaps it is in need of an automatic transmission.

The French revolution the title actually refers to, then, is a poetic one characterized by the playful speed of automatism. Language poet Ron Silliman characterizes The Tennis Court Oath as "one book / that's not too much in love with beauty"(qtd. in Shoptaw 42). Unless, of course, if that beauty comes at the expense of a more heroic Modernism. The last line (as well as many others), seems to take a swipe at the morose Eliot of The Waste Land: "lilacs blowing across his face glad he brought you"(12). In The Waste Land lilacs bloom from the dead land, thus playing upon the puns with "lie" and "lack." In Pound's famous poem, "In A Station of the Metro," petals lie lifelessly on a "wet, black bough." Here, in contrast, the lilacs move joyously in a line whose syntax and lack of punctuation suggest the

speed of automatic writing. Lilacs are blowing across his
face. He is glad he brought you. Too slow indeed.

Disruptive Potential

As evidenced by the last line of "The Tennis Court
Oath," automatism has a tremendous disruptive potential.
Part of this potential comes from the speed of automatism.
If it takes thirty seconds to write, "Lilacs are blowing
across his face; he is glad he brought you," but you only
give yourself twenty seconds per line, then you might
produce something like, "lilacs blowing across his face glad
he brought you." As speed increases, more casualties will
occur. The results can be tragic in the larger social
context where, in a study by Luc Boltanski, accidents are
caused by drivers who try "to maximize their gains in space,
which would be equivalent to maximizing their profits in
time"(qtd. in Ross 61). In such cases, accidents are truly
accidental, undesired upshots of the capitalist utilization
of speed. In rhetorical automatism, by contrast, accidents
are desired. Whatever the means used to obtain rhetorical
interruptions, the inevitable result is a writing of
fragments. Practiced by the likes of Nietzsche, Walter
Benjamin, and Jacques Derrida, the virtues of fragmented
writing are nowhere more aptly described than in the
autobiography of Roland Barthes:

> It is in order to halt, to deflect, to divide this
> descent of discourse toward a destiny of the
> subject, that at certain times the [alphabetic
> fragment] calls you to order (to disorder) and
> says: *Cut! Resume the story in another way.*(148)

For Barthes, the very thing that traditional discourse
aspires to--a unified "destiny" or culmination of a thesis
on any given topic--is the one thing to be avoided. Rather,
one must tell the story in as many ways as possible--through
fragments. If it is a bitter irony that Barthes' life was
cut short after he was hit by a passing automobile, it is
also one that alludes to technology's implicit capacity for
interruption. The "Metropolis" section of Manhattan
Transfer, for instance, concludes with a collision between a
carriage and a horseless carriage. The implication is not
merely that one way of life is violently overtaking another,
but that the newly automated metropolis is a place teeming
with potential disasters. Such events may be destructive,
but they are also accompanied by a "yelling mouth gaping
under a visored cap"(Dos Passos 48), a silent scream therapy
also practiced by Roland Barthes who, throughout much of his
latter career, often careened into more pedestrian forms of
scholarship.

The Network of Fragments

For my critical purposes, all these elements of
automatism come together (or apart) in the creation of a

more fragmented, multidimensional discourse than I would
otherwise be capable of. Thus, rather than attempting to
reduce complex issues into more simple conclusions, I hope
to (especially in the dissertation's latter chapters) raise
sets of possibilities that convey more and more facets of a
situation. The purpose is not to resist conclusions, but to
envision a fuller range of their possibilities, a range of
different and opposing ideas which may actually electrify
one another through their very differences in resistance and
potential. In describing the methodology of his
autobiography, Roland Barthes resorts to the image of "so
many stones on the perimeter of a circle"(93), an image
which to me suggests the fragmented nature of an automated
work but not its interrelationships. Thus, I prefer to
think of an automated criticism as existing in
fragments/circuits in a vast electrical system. To be
activated, such a system requires the presence of both
writer and reader, two positions which the subject can fill
simultaneously. This system will always exhibit some form
of coherence, but such correspondences need not always be
complete or consistent. They may change at any time. They
can be added to, stolen from. The only rule for producing
or reading such texts is that the process must involve some
element of the unconscious and the mechanical *in addition to*

one's normal talents and habits.   Only in that way can the
traditionally organic text maximize its properties as a
cyborg, not replacing but supplementing the textual
ontologies that have been awaiting a mechanical
interruption.

CHAPTER 2
THE MECHANICAL OCCULT

Oriental Specters

This chapter will explore the possibility of using the
historical avant-garde as a model for adding the element of
chance to criticism itself. More specifically, it will take
up Peter Wollen's discussion of Orientalism as an alternate
mode to Modernism's dominant, rationalist strain, but with a
particular focus on Surrealism's interest in the Occult as a
symbolically subversive practice. Thus, while an industry
like Hollywood used rationalist means to create magical
appearances, I hope to eventually introduce "magic" into the
critical apparatus itself. Following Louis Aragon's
troubling but provocative connection of Orientalism with
ornamental variety in his valorization of "thousand-armed
India"(qtd. in Wollen 24), this chapter will ask how an
Oriental aesthetic can be employed as a resource of
difference to counteract modernism's more exclusive
qualities, the very qualities that would construct the East
as an impractical other in the first place. Or, to use
filmic terminology, how might critical practices create more
open "film" sets, enlarge their "camera" frames, or

introduce an extempore element into their workings? I will also discuss both Orientalism and the Occult as forms of popular culture, investigating the assumption that in order to progressively change the situations of the populace, one should, as Sylvia Harvey suggests, utilize forms that are already popular(79).

In addition, supplementing industrial modernism with a more ornamental aesthetic involves asking how one could redirect the controlling tendencies of the high modernists away from the undesirable political positions they enacted. Undoubtedly, such a project will be, in keeping with Aragon's image, "thousand-armed," attempting to provide openness where the high modernists called for closure. Or more importantly, it will attempt to open up possibilities of understanding and exploration within their own writing not in order to redeem these modernists, but with an eye to designating escape routes from their rhetorical positions. One could say I am looking for phantoms that these writers gave only partial voice to because such ghosts would by their very nature be alien to their political and aesthetic projects. As Maria Torok describes it in "Story of Fear," the psychic phantom is "a formation of the dynamic unconscious that is found there not because of the subject's own repression but on account *of a direct empathy with the*

unconscious or the rejected psychic matter of a parental object"(181). For writers who sought to consolidate a tradition every bit as much as they wanted to "make it new," Torok's story of otherness is an intriguing possibility indeed.

The phantom, which might be likened to a more immaterial form of Bakhtinian dialogism, occurs when the speaking subject uses an alien voice but does not recognize it, and in the case of a "phobia-inducing" phantom this state can prevent the subject from recognizing the object's fundamental separateness from the psyche. But there is a more hopeful way of envisioning the phantom, one that plays on its ability to gain the subject's empathy. If, rather than the analyst's attempts to weaken the phantom and preserve a unified subjectivity, one instead seeks to encourage ghostly presences which mute or even transform violent unities, she will have embarked upon a sort of dialectical haunting. This methodology privileges differentiation and dispersion rather than unity, and presumes extremely permeable ego boundaries. To change (ideology, gender, race, species etc) is to enact a "becoming," that is, "to emit particles that take on certain relations of movement and rest because they enter a particular zone of proximity"(Deleuze and Guattari 273).

The ultimate goal will be to haunt Pound, Eliot, and Yeats now in order to map potential becomings which they never allowed. In Ezra Pound's Ur Cantos, which were eventually dropped from the work, he draws upon Occult texts that maintain all intellects are capable of assuming infinite shapes(Logenbach 243). It's almost as if, as was the case with the compilers who dropped the Lilith sections of The Bible, Pound feared the ideological terrain introduced by his early drafts. Ultimately, I hope to delineate the Utopian elements occluded by the conservative poetic choices each of these writers made. Blinded by metal gleaming from the hard edges of their intricate yet efficient machines, one might look askance for the blue gleam of another arm sketching a Picabia.

This gleam also flashes back through history to a Crusader's shield, thus linking mechanical and religious imperialism. That is why Aragon opposes an image of Eastern religion not just to Christianity, but to Western Culture as a whole. Aragon was part of a general Surrealist movement which "appealed to the Orient for aid against the binarism of 'logical Europe'"(Wollen 24). In doing so, the Surrealists were part of a larger tradition of Orientalism which to varying degrees countered dominant Western aesthetics. The gleam reflects backward once more, however, to remind one that the growth of Orientalism coincides with

Western expansion into the East(Said 41). Said uses Arthur
Balfour as a paradigmatic case, a politician whose speeches
of 1910 not only equate British knowledge of Egypt with
Egypt, but justify imperialism on the alleged inability of
Egypt to rule itself(32-3). Said further insists it is
impossible for Westerners to discuss the East without
appropriating it in a misleading way. Therefore, one sees
not the Orient itself, but a Freudian Orient, a Darwinian
Orient, and so forth(22). Ezra Pound's fetishization of
Confucius operates in this manner: "Pound's concern [in the
Chinese Cantos] is with continuity and extent. . . and the
effect is one of almost timeless interpenetration of past
and present as history yields its 'permanent' moral
insights"(Nicholls 115). Not only does Nicholls' previous
observation reflect Pound's capitalist-inflected desires for
both internal continuity and extensive coverage, but the
concept of timeless truth relates to Pound's early interest
in Chinese ideograms thought to access a truth that is
simultaneously religious and scientific, what Robert Kern
calls "the whole postromantic quest for pure experience and
unmediated vision"(1). The idea of permanent moral insights
also implies reading one culture in terms of another, a
process which inevitably leads to the type of projection
Said speaks of. This sort of appropriation, as Peter Wollen
insists, could take even more disturbing forms in a fascist

context: "The West described the East to itself in terms that simply reflected its own political anxieties and nightmares: an exaggerated absolutism dispensing with the established rule of law"(Wollen 5). The problem with this type of projection, in addition to its racist overtones, is that it deflects attention away from the political problems at hand. The success of fascism testifies that this latter tradition of Orientalism eventually dominated in Europe, and Wollen in fact reads the possibility of a more progressive Modernist Orientalism as a lost moment. Thus, even in attempting to imagine a Marxist or Surrealist Orient, one must be aware of its connections to a practice which in varying degrees involves voyeurism, racism, material domination, and violence.

Yet, rather than jettison Orientalism's Utopian tones in order to avoid its unsavory history, it would seem more productive to recognize the complexity of any appropriative act. To appropriate something is after all to question, or at the very least draw attention to, its context. Given the unsatisfactory orthodoxies of the Modernist era, one must consider seriously Madame Blavatsky's claim, however secondhand, that the East "had a practical, as well as a spiritual, knowledge that the West sorely needed"(Bevir 748), even if any attempt to utilize Eastern aesthetics to counter Western modernism will involve not only a

simplification of both, but also a partial complicity with Eurocentrism. Thus, as Homi Bhaba suggests, any version of Orientalism is determined by the splits and ambivalences of the subjects who enunciate it(Lewis 41). These ambivalences spare no one, from Reina Lewis' Victorian women whose gender positions undercut the mastery of Orientalism(15) to James Joyce whose Orientalism is "avowedly intertextual" yet also complicit with Orientalist clichés and their objectification of women(Kershner 292). Or, in an opposing case, the focus on H.D.'s bisexual feminism has until recently prevented critics from noting how she preferred the Dorian model of beauty as opposed to "the Ionian, associated with decadent Athens, [which] represents a racially impure strain, associated with Asiatic influence"(Laity). And, furthermore, Susan Edmunds has shown the need for "interrogating the racial ideologies behind H.D.'s representations of ancient Egypt" in such texts as Palimpsest and Helen in Egypt(Miller 77). If "even H.D." can have such ambiguous relationships to the East, the possibility of a completely subversive form of Orientalism seems quite a fantasy. Yet despite these ambiguities, and precisely because Western Orientalism is inevitably a "public fantasy"(Kershner 273), one might explore those elements of the myth that at least have Utopian possibilities. If Oriental tales posit the East as a

marvelous site of endless wandering(276-7), one might ask how such attraction could be used as a mechanism for wandering invention. While a Westerner may never be able to cede the Orient its own terms, in its more Utopian tones Oriental thought[1] has manifested traits that could augment Modernism's official reliance on the logics of a machine aesthetic. Most notably, I would like to focus on various political associations with the term "extravagance" often connected with the so-called "Oriental" style.

Wollen begins his chapter on Modernist Orientalism by discussing the liberating aesthetics of fashion designer Paul Poiret and the choreography of the Russian Ballet. While Poiret's flamboyant, loose fitting fashions contributed to a literal freeing of the female body, the Russian Ballet "was both 'ultra-natural'(wild, untamed, passionate, chaotic, animal) and 'ultra-artificial' (fantastic, androgynous, bejewelled, decorative, decadent)"(26-7). In this sense, both art forms were a continuation of the Decadent tradition which attempted to free moral actions from "natural" laws by aestheticizing morality. Neither of these practices sought a mere leveling of values, but instead attempted an actual change in

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[1] Unless otherwise noted in the text, I intend terms like "Orientalism" and "Oriental thought" to refer to Westernized appropriations of the East and not necessarily to any ontologically accurate citation of Asian cultures.

practices to counter the dominant tendencies of a modernizing world. Fauvists such as Matisse embraced a version of Orientalism by raising decoration above its subordinate status in painting. And in a most political sense, Bataille linked the excesses of Orientalism to Revolution, which he defined as a cathartic "expenditure from below"(27), a wrench thrown into the regulatory procedures of production-based capitalism.

As evidenced in the rhetoric of Aragon, the Surrealists became the most vocal supporters of Orientalism. Breton, the self-professed leader of the movement, viewed the Orient as one of many "negative" terms that could be embraced as a positive counterpoint to the world of bourgeois respectability(Wollen 26). On one level, Breton's position could be dismissed as part of a long tradition in the avant-garde of adopting the name given by one's detractors as a rallying cry (e.g. Cubism, Impressionism). But in the case of the association of Orientalism (in WWI) with Germany's alleged barbarism, adopting the pejorative term could obviously be more political than juvenile. Breton also qualified this more complicated espousal of Orientalism by describing it as a moral opposition that should accompany struggle against material oppression(25). Finally, Wollen himself describes a way of viewing such cultural and metaphorical territory as part of a general project designed

"to find ways to disentangle and deconstruct the cascade of antinomies that constituted the identity of modernism"(29). This latter goal requires viewing "oppositional" terms such as Orientalism as complex clusters of history, myth, autobiography, and metaphor that can grow around the hard lines limiting constructions of historical identity and praxis. Consequently, these clusters would not so much describe simple oppositions as enact portions of a larger attempt to activate previously unvoiced areas of discourse. It is with these goals in mind that I would like to explore another of Surrealism's oppositional terms, the Occult, precisely because it engages so many images that are either contradictory, fascinating, or shocking. After delineating some of these images, I hope to point in a direction that will enact a provisional and decidedly temporary Occult critical aesthetic. Among other things (including an exploration of its own oppositions), this aesthetic will engage the political, the experimental, and the popular in order to reexplore some of the quandaries introduced in the first chapter. For as will be seen, even the most outlandish elements of Occult thought have much in common with technology, mass media, and Hollywood. It is with these connections that I hope to ultimately reveal new perspectives (and new specters) in the high modernist poets.

The Rhetoric of Occultism

The Surrealists had many sources from which develop an interest in the Occult. One of the most famous Occultists of the 19th Century, Eliphas Lévi, lived in Paris his whole life. His revisions of theories on astral light most likely provided inspiration for Charles Baudelaire's poem *Correspondances* (Williams 45). In turn, Lévi's belief that the universe is filled with invisible traces is hospitable to French Symbolism's "poetry of rather an esoteric kind" (Wilson 22). As in England and elsewhere, there was a tremendous Occult revival in France, with at least half a dozen French magazines devoted to the subject (Warlick 24). This interest only increased after the tragedies of WWI, making everyone desire "to lift the veil" (qtd. in Warlick 24).

Yet, as Nadia Choucha argues in <u>Surrealism and the Occult</u>, the Surrealists "rejected spiritualism but adopted its methods" (49). Many of the early Surrealist experiments, including automatic writing and the use of chance-based games, do in fact resemble other divination methods used the world over. While Surrealists folded the edges of paper to form the phrase "The Exquisite Corpse Shall Drink the New Wine," the Cabalist used anagrams to try and find the matrix of the world's languages. The unpredictable outcome of such

practices satisfies both Bataille's "will to alteration" (Krauss 152) and the Occult desire for mystery. Yet, to take automatic writing as an example, though it may be inspired by the sort of channeling that Yeats' wife claimed to do, André Breton was careful, in the end, to attribute the power of such techniques to the unconscious, not the supernatural. This is not to say that Breton eschewed Occult material (as he officially avoided nonmonogamous sexuality and drug use), merely that he subordinated it to the scientific and political claims he made for Surrealism. Breton in fact followed in a long history of French artistic rebellion against the Catholic church. Like Baudelaire, the Symbolists, and Apollinaire (who coined the term Surrealism), Breton looked to Satan as a mythological figure representing "rebellion and intellectual curiosity"(Choucha 16) as well as sexual freedom. In his novel <u>Arcanum 17</u>, Breton writes, "but Lucifer, the outlaw intellect, begets two sisters, Poetry and Liberty"(97).

Thus, the Surrealist Satan was not so much a being as a rhetorical position with a history leading back to the "transformation of gods into devils [that] had begun almost immediately after Constantine had made Christianity the official religion of the Empire in 313 A.D."(King 56). In his many discussions of the history of witchcraft, Carlo Ginzburg charts the continuation of this revolt, citing not

only a "disguised social rebellion" in witchcraft, but also a "social aggression" in witches' confessions(167-8). This type of aggression directed itself against the Euro-Christian attempt to enforce an intellectual universe that unfailingly associated deviance with opposition, creating such strange bedfellows as Occult imagery and orthodox Judaism. In fact, European anti-Semitism has a long history of associating Jewish ritual with human sacrifice. Jews also became implicated in tales of occult regicide societies that Umberto Eco describes in _Serendipities_ as "too interesting to be derailed by fact"(14). A similarly damning set of stereotypes surrounded the Gypsies as well, and their history of persecution, like that of witches and Jews, dates back to the Middle Ages. Athanasius I of Constinanople, for instance, instructed his clergy "especially not to allow the Gypsies to enter their homes, because they teach devilish things"(Fraser 41). While persecution of witches seems to have disappeared in the last two centuries (unless one classifies such persecution under a larger misogynistic label), Gypsies joined the Jews as targets of the Nazi extermination project, a phenomenon Angus Fraser discusses in a chapter entitled "The Forgotten Holocaust." One sees in these designations, both past and present, a sort of dialectical Satanism in which

marginalized groups are accused of evil in order to justify violence from hegemonic classes.

As one counter-measure, marginalized groups may cite deviant systems as a rallying cry against very real oppressions. In this rhetorical vein, Engels described evil as the motive force of historical development(Choucha 85), ultimately transforming the terms Good/Evil to the Hegelian abstractions of Thesis/Antithesis. The Surrealists looked to Les Chants de Maldoror, a prose poem written by a Frenchman (Isidore Ducasse) who grew up in the colony of Uruguay, for inspiration in their version of oppositional Marxism. This book "dedicated to the sanctity of crime"(10) also attempts a redefinition of evil, equating deviance with a revolutionary spirit opposed to bourgeois morality. One of Maldoror's first victims, in fact, is the family gathered at a "peaceful hearth"(29). He disturbs their bliss with screams that "it is possible to hear. . . three leagues away carried by the wind from one city to another"(30), sounds that seemingly awaken them from the insularity of the nuclear family to the beginnings of social consciousness. Maldoror in turn valorizes the chaotic ocean and multi-limbed octopus(17-25), seemingly paving the way for an aesthetic of wandering and multiplicity. Similar creatures appear in Foucault's Pendulum, "polypod animals which can move in all directions," pointing nowhere but towards "an

occult direction of history"(Eco 260), almost as if the
"straight and narrow" were a moral ideal based on spatial
limitations. Thus, while Gypsies have been reviled for
having "no real homeland, since they were born on the
move"(Fraser 125), these same qualities would make them
ideal for the cultural destabilization that Maldoror and the
Surrealists called for. Their lived status, like that of
the Jews, becomes transformed into the rhetorical
inflections of diaspora revered by poststructuralists for
their political possibilities. The diaspora (in all its
historical, metaphorical, and political senses) opposes
disarticulation, experiment, and nomadism to the plane of
enforced consistency(Deleuze and Guattari 159). In light of
this theorized context, the deviance of Satanism (among many
other myth complexes) could thus be cited as a form of
sabotage similar to the imagery in Walter Benjamin's <u>Arcades
Project</u> when he tells materialist critics to read history
looking for weapons(481).

This dialectic of negative terminology becomes
especially telling in Francis King's antagonistic book on
the Occult, <u>Sexuality, Magic, and Perversion</u>. Describing
the dubious historicity of medieval witch cults, King
compares them to personal anecdotes of acquaintances "from
the strange intellectual underworld of Marxist sectarianism"
(58). This sort of footnoting makes it seem as if King has

merely substituted Marxists for medievalism's Jews in a
guilt-by-association rhetoric designed to kill two birds
with one stone. This rhetoric is unlocked in two chapters
by Carlo Ginzburg which are associationally titled "Lepers,
Jews, Muslims" and "Jews, Hebrews, Witches." Charting the
birth of medieval witch hunts, Ginzburg explains how the
process of association works: "From a relatively restricted
social group (the lepers) one passes to a larger, but
ethnically and religiously delimited group (the Jews),
finally reaching a potentially boundless sect (male and
female witches)"(72). All three of these groups are
marginalized, but the notion of witchcraft allows a
metaphorical dimension previously unrealizable. The
medieval witch trials are almost a breakthrough in the
powers of projection, allowing for that strange overlapping
of real bodies and spectral mythology that fueled the Nazi
depiction of the Jews and America's anti-Semitic brand of
anti-Communism in the 1950s.[2]

In another chapter of King's book, "Masses--Black,
White, and Amatory," King comes up with a list of rogues
whose provocative traits suggest models of political and
literary deviance. One of these characters possessed an

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[2]And the McCarthy era, of course, was implicitly critiqued
in the Jewish Arthur Miller's retelling of the Salem Witch
Trials, The Crucible(1953).

especially strange coterie of talents: "In Paris [de Chasteuil] set up in business as a purveyor of spells and poisons, as an alchemist, and as a forger"(67). The odd vocational combination makes this figure sound much like Derrida's version of Thoth, the Egyptian god of writing: "sly, slippery, and masked, an intriguer and a card, like Hermes, he is neither king nor jack, but rather a sort of joker, a floating signifier, a wild card, one who puts play into play"(Dissemination 93). Derrida's use of Occult imagery here demonstrates his association of writing with deviance, a liberating roguery of unauthorized knowledge. In Ginzburg's historicization of witch myth, he reminds us that witches were not always associated with flight. Only when their Sabbatical flights became an image to convey the "sinister ubiquity of the plot [against Christendom]" did this image gain popularity. Returning to King's association of witchcraft with Marxism, one might add an unnatural and unobservable witch flight to the unpredictable movements of Derridean experiment. The result would be a whichcraft or switchcraft with an eye turned towards political subversion.

Therefore, even as the multiplicity of writing can be metaphorized as Occult practice, the Occult can be a model of radical writing or writing as mapping. In his book Paris Peasant, subtitled Night Walker, Louis Aragon describes the public garden as container of the "bizarre and footloose"

within cities, comparing the plants to fortune tellers and astrologers(98-9). In his attempt to get beyond the rationalism he saw as dominating modern thought, he viewed mysticism and the Occult as a metaphor for the "excitement of the manifold forms of the idea"(137). Thus, Aragon's adoption of Occult terminology is a calculated attempt at showing that the negative term is always a neglected term. Rather than opposing enlightened rationalism to benighted Occultism, he feels the pulse of Hermes' "unstable ambivalence": "This god of calculation, arithmetic, and rational science also presides over the occult sciences astrology and alchemy"(Dissemination 93). While one can have a science of writing and the Occult, the duality of Hermes suggests that the discourse of science can never completely extricate itself from the Occult. In fact, David Hess in Science and the New Age suggests that scientific skeptics who engage in "boundary-work," the division of hard science from Occult thought, have historically done so more out of shared preoccupations than fundamental differences in outlook(28-9). Precisely what Aragon writes about in Paris Peasant, in fact, are those urban (and by extension intellectual) spaces where boundaries are cris-crossed unpredictably.

Such border crossing may be found in one of Sigmund Freud's lectures on psychoanalysis entitled "Dreams and

Occultism." Freud's stated goal in this lecture is to
examine Occultism's claim that it can show "'more things in
heaven and earth than are dreamt of in our philosophy'"(38).
At the risk of never allowing Freud to smoke a regular
cigar, we might note the strangeness of this quote with
respect to the lecture's title. Literally, the title
opposes interpretable dreams and occult phenomena, but of
course the implicit battle takes place between science and
the Occult. As in the title, the rational mode of science
and the irrational discourse of dreams overlap uncomfortably
in the essay itself. Early on, Freud describes a
fundamental obstacle to rational inquiry of the Occult:
"Reason becomes the enemy which withholds from us so many
possibilities of pleasure"(41). And the pleasure of the
Occult does tempt Freud throughout. Almost despite the
atheistic approach of psychoanalysis, Freud seems to get
caught up in his own "experiences" (and those of Jung) with
thought transference. While they almost all have to do with
coincidences of detail that occur in his sessions with
patients, Freud feels that he has relatively reliable
evidence that thought transference exists. To rhetorically
shore up his arguments, however, he turns to the ants: "we
do not know how a common purpose comes about in the great
insect communities: possibly it is done by means of a direct
psychical transference"(68). This last detail is not meant

to make fun of Freud so much as to show the range of interests the so-called scientific mind can be prey to. Bell's assistant Watson, for instance, believed that the telephone would allow communication with the dead (Kershner 267), and as Freud's case indicates, his interests were not anomalous. In sum, Occultism can't show us more things than science, but the science of dreams (psychoanalysis) struggles to navigate the same uncanny coincidences fetishized by Occultists.

Thus, one could argue that scientific antagonism towards Occultism does not show a lack of interest in spiritual matters, but a fear that they may usurp the primacy of science. Freud admits as much when he states, "I too felt a dread of a threat against our scientific Weltanschauung, which, I feared, was bound to give place to spiritualism or mysticism"(67). The issue is one of control over information, as Samuel Beckett humorously suggests in his poem "Whoroscope." By changing the spelling of Horoscope in his title, Beckett foregrounds issues of ownership that relate to the poem's subject, René Descartes. In the notes at the end of the poem, Beckett claims that he was inspired by the fact that Descartes "kept his own birthday to himself so that no astrologer could cast his nativity"(5). This fear suggests the inextricable alliances between reason and magic, and the poem is in fact filled

with references to the strange habits and sophisms of the rationalist, "Cartesian" philosopher. Perhaps the most interesting lines occur in reference to the queen of Sweden's requirement that Descartes appear to her at five in the morning:

> Then I will rise and move moving
> toward Rahab of the snows,
> the murdering matinal pope-confessed amazon,
> Christina the ripper.
> Oh Weulles spare the blood of a Frank
> who has climbed the bitter steps.(4)

Descartes has slept until noon all his life, and his anger suggests the extreme difficulty of breaking one's personal habits. And yet, calling the queen a murderess is extremely strong language, so strong that it overextends bounds of common insult. If the rationalist mode of thought can be defined by its regularity of procedure, however, then breaking that regularity is tantamount to murdering reason. In this register of argument, Beckett is as much writing about the reputation of Descartes as about the man himself. To lend support to this rhetorical reading, one might note how the philosopher is one of the few people whose name has become so influential as to gain the status of a common adjective--Cartesian. The allusion to Weulles (whom Beckett describes as a peripatetic physician and enemy of Descartes) in the very next line suggests that he is in league with Christina, and on a symbolic level he is. Combining images

of wandering and habit breaking, the two figures conspire against the inherent sleepiness of unyielding faith in reason.

Beckett thus alludes not only to the questionable reason of Descartes, but to the history of science's adulteration. Particularly in Descartes' century (17th), the debate between Cartesian rationalists and Hermeticists can be viewed as "more of a fraternal rivalry within the same family than as a combat between spokesmen of radically divergent world views"(Brann 262). Hermeticists charged the rationalists with Atheism while rationalists charged hermeticists with religious fanaticism. And, interestingly enough, each side charged the other with faulty science. Joseph Glanville, on the hermeticists' side, suggested in his famous "Philosophical Endeavour towards the Defence of the Being of Witches and Apparitions"(1666) that those scientists who dismissed spiritual phenomenon out of hand were not being sufficiently "skeptical" in the scientific sense(Prior 321). That the proto-postmodernist Beckett was interested in such debates in the 20th-century suggests how the spiritual fixations of modern science are not to be relegated to its formative stages. Umberto Eco's quintessentially postmodern Foucault's Pendulum, in fact, begins with its main character sneaking into a museum where he finds himself wondering at the seemingly discontinuous

groupings: "Why should this cubicle, as positivist-scientific, a thing out of Verne, stand beside the emblematic lion and serpent"(14). Nor are these overlappings to be credited solely to the "earliest development of a commercialized 'mass' market for [Occultist] cultural products in the eighteenth century" (Campbell 46) or to the response of 19th Century intellectuals to the rise of Darwinian materialism(Sumser 499). Rather, as Eco suggests, all these manifestations allude to a dialectical relationship between scientific endeavor and its "irrationalist" others, a relationship that is changed and intensified differently in various historical periods.

The Case Against

With this persistent yet historically differentiated notion of Occultism in mind, I would like to consider the 20th-century context in which the rational and irrational mixed together in particularly unfortunate ways. If Occult adaptations lead too far away from rational structures of thought, overemphasizing their fantastic nature at the expense of history or politics, as Linda Dittmar warns(14), they may perpetuate existing political stereotypes (such as the misogyny or consumerism fetishized in Vampire narratives) or hint at even worse xenophobias (such as

fascism). Interestingly, one of Aleister Crowley's most
spiritualist texts (in that he claimed to "receive" it in a
manner akin to automatic writing), often strays in this
direction. <u>The Book of the Law</u> (1904), "dictated in Cairo
between noon and 1 p.m on three successive days"(5) and
which purports to show the relativity of all philosophies,
at times strays into protofascist discourse. "Compassion is
the vice of kings" Crowley rants in Nietzschean fashion,
"Stamp down the wretched and the weak"(31). While, as my
allusion to Nietzsche suggests, there is nothing
particularly Occult about that statement, I would argue that
the mystical mode in which Crowley produced <u>The Book of the</u>
<u>Law</u> prevented him from considering the political
ramifications of his philosophical/poetical statements. Of
course, the same could be true of Nietzsche, who produced
many of his most famous writings (including ad hominem
attacks on physical corruption) not under a mystical
influence, but during the late stages of syphilis. Neither
of these writers had the benefit of a Fascist presence with
which to compare their statements, but they both produced
writings that could easily be appropriated into Nazi
discourse.

Still, Morris Berman argues that to some extent "occult
sensibilities" did pervade the Third Reich(280). Not only
were many Nazi leaders inspired by the racist Occultism of

Guido von List(258), but trance-inducing practices seeped
into Nazi ceremonies in such forms as "lighting effects,
public rituals, symbolic imagery, and Hitler's own
spellbinding oratory"(255). Such ritual performance,
furthermore, "is an important element of occult practice
because it affects human physiological response"(285).
Following Gustav Le Bon's 1895 prophecy that the 20th
century would be "the era of crowds"(Wistrich 42), Mussolini
and Hitler attempted to orchestrate ritual response on a
mass level. Consequently, any progressive use of Occult
practices must, in the spirit of the avant-garde, involve
techniques which disrupt ritual response. Where fascist
arts (which include its Occult associations) express a
preoccupation with control and submission(Sontag 316), an
avant-garde Occult must promote a more Utopian
unpredictability.

If Nazism appropriated the Occult, it was also a
caricatured Christianity with "its 'martyrs,' its
'apostles,' its 'dogmas' and sacraments"(Wistrich 43). As
such, its rhetoric directed followers into thought
structures resembling those Friedrich Nietzsche critiques in
The AntiChrist. In his infamous polemic against
Christianity, Nietzsche is not so much interested in the
professed beliefs of Christians as in "the psychological
type"(600) and its manifestations in lived experience. Most

of Nietzsche's arguments center around what he views as an inherent tendency in Christian thought towards passivity, a moral and political nightmare leading to "a being at home in a world which is no longer in contact with any kind of reality, a merely 'inner' world, a 'true' world, an 'eternal' world"(602). Morris Berman points to a similar strain in Nazism when he describes it as another version of the Western "ascent phenomenon"(254). Namely, it offered Germans salvation, in the form of the Fuhrer, from their sense of being trapped in meaningless surroundings. In their postwar sense of humiliation and defeat, Germans were ready for an "ascent" that ironically paralleled an inflation rate so devastating it could literally be measured by the hour. This phenomenon is religious in nature, but not limited to religion; Nietzsche predicts political domination not only for Christians, but for "idealists" and artists as well. The spiritualist spectatorship of Yeats' poems (discussed in the next chapter) embodies a similar passivity,[3] one in which all the Germans had to do was believe in the mystical goals implied by Leni Riefenstal's early mountain climbing films and given political reality in Triumph of the Will. From there, it was only a short time

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[3]And one could argue that the more fascist strains of Irish nationalism are to some extent a byproduct of defeatism over British rule.

before this nation of mystics "had to find human devils because they were living in a secular society"(Berman 271). Despite the many attempts to connect Nazism to specific Occult allegiances, such as in Dusty Sklar's Gods and Beasts, this secularized inflection of traditional theology provides a more revealing account of post-WWI German psychology.

Nietzsche's argument can apply to Occult thought as well, however, as evidenced in Adorno's distaste for an Occultism which "enhances disillusion by surrendering the idea of the human even more completely to blind nature than it actually is"(qtd. in Materer 15), a critique which could also indict Yeats' acceptance of the world's inherently evil nature. One sees behind Adorno's comment his interest, as expressed in The Dialectic of Enlightenment, in the way ideological commodities tend to confirm one's sense of inevitability concerning the way things are. As he points out in "The Stars Down to Earth," horoscope advice and other forms of popular fortune telling "are geared to the structured everyday life of the consumer"(Nederman 327). Between the Christian's gaze to the beyond, the Occultist's belief in fate, and the commodity that reiterates its means of production, there is very little room for transgressive political action. If action does occur in these systems, it is likely to take the form of violent dogmatism. In fact,

it may be almost inevitable when "even doubt is a sin"
(Nietzsche 635). Such an intolerance for ambiguity leads to
the oversimplification of all things into the categories of
good and evil(597). As evidenced in much of Pound's poetics
and fascist thought in general, the difference between
naming and judging is erased(Nicholls 102).

Occult Following

Despite all these problems, when courses on fascism and
the Occult are among the most well attended at universities
(Sontag 323), it is somewhat unwise to eschew these topics
or fail to recognize what makes them so attractive. Mere
critique of these systems, being trapped in the tradition of
enlightenment, may be insufficient because "the only kind of
thinking that is sufficiently hard to shatter myths is
ultimately self-destructive"(Horkheimer 4). What Horkheimer
and Adorno don't foresee is that a successful subversion of
fascism may involve utilizing the very myths of the culture
industry they attack. Occultism, like everything else, may
have become commodified, but Walter Benjamin has envisioned
(in his study of 19th Century Paris) more Utopian uses of
the commodity. For if capitalism has reified Occultism,
this "standstill is utopia and the dialectical image,
therefore, [a] dream image. . . . afforded by the commodity
per se: as fetish"(Arcades Project 10). In other words, the

spectacle of Occultism cannot be dismissed out of hand because its Utopian element is precisely its ability to lead (however indirectly) to the unconscious networks of culture.

In a related vein, Georges Bataille suggests that the religious impulse utilized so effectively by fascism might represent a social impulse that Marxists must address if they are ever to garner true popular support(Stoekl 932). Bataille's general style of investigation, in fact, could be labeled as appropriative. Rather than trying to avoid those practices which might be "bourgeois" or "fascist," he instead looks to the successful deployment of these systems for tools that might serve a Marxist cause. Consequently, Bataille analyzes fascism not as a separate evil, but as a species of psychological heterogeneity which can arise in any society. This heterogeneity, unassimilable by its very nature, either changes society irrevocably or is censored by it. Fundamentally, then, Marxist heterogeneity and fascist heterogeneity share many of the same properties. In <u>Clues, Myths, and the Historical Method</u>, Ginzburg points out how such ambiguities made the entire College of Sociology (to which Bataille belonged) a very strange place, including in its members communists, an anti-Semite, and Anatole Lewitzky who would be shot by the Nazis in 1942(143). The very heterogeneity of the group, however, would seemingly support

Bataille's thesis that the left and the right were competing to monopolize the same impulses.

In fact, a fundamental difference between fascism and traditional socialism, according to Bataille, is that the former "leaves no social faction inactive"(154). When one contrasts the 1930s successes of fascism with the Frankfurt school's chagrin over Marxism's lack of popular reception, one can't overlook this difference. Viewing Bataille in such a light, his interest in such seemingly diverse topics as religion and eroticism makes more sense. In his "Preface to the History of Eroticism," Bataille justifies his focus on eroticism by stating, "Human reflection cannot be casually separated from an object that concerns it in the highest degree"(238). To disregard erotic questions would in effect leave a most important "social faction" to the appropriation of fascism, and in fact Susan Sontag laments the historical eroticization of Nazi paraphernalia(321). Thus, it is of the utmost importance that Bataille not only writes about eroticism, but often writes in an erotic (what some would call the pornographic) mode. One can not merely write about the erotic and religious functions, but must activate them within one's cultural production. The spectator must be sufficiently aroused in order to be roused to action of any kind, especially those acts which embody the so-called altruistic impulses. This does not mean,

however, that the writer/critic/artist supports the reactionary interpretations of these human compulsions. Instead, he or she acts with the fundamental disrespect of Brecht's Messingkauf who approaches the proverbial brass band to purchase their instruments as brass(Ray 48).

This sort of disrespect can eliminate the extremes that Occult critique must avoid if it is to achieve any kind of subversive tendency. Just as Denise Levertov literally jetted between her political (Vietnam) and aesthetic interests (anti-war poems) in order to bind them together,[4] Occult critique must continually switch its beliefs so that spiritual attractions always return to everyday matters. By connecting Occultism to Orientalism[5] one may look to the poetic theories of Allen Ginsberg as a model for what such critique would desire. Describing William Carlos Williams' organicism in relation to his own, Ginsberg insists that the "no ideas but in things" maxim doesn't make things an end in

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[4]Levertov's frequent trips to Vietnam during the war betray a vigilant concern over the artist's political commitment, regardless of what she may have done or learned there. Her poems from this period form a model for contemporary poets such as Carolyn Forché in her poems about Central America and her elucidation of the "poetry of witness" as a political strategy.

[5]I connect Occultism and Orientalism not merely by way of opposition to the dominant histories of Modernism, but as a way of positioning the eclecticism of Occult societies. The 20th century OTO for instance, stood for Ordo Templi Orientis, and suggested not an opposition to modernism, but to the limits of Western philosophy as a whole.

themselves, but instead seeks to use things as building
blocks for ideas("Williams in a World of Objects" 33).
Ginsberg links this aesthetic technique to Buddhist
meditation which seeks enlightenment through such mundane
techniques as focusing on one's breaths(35). Buddhist
meditation further connects with aesthetics in making
Ginsberg more aware of breath as the basis of song(Portuges
12). It also improves one's awareness of the world by
fostering egolessness(Ginsberg in Portuges 11), perhaps
leading one to not so much a progression from things to
ideas as a circular loop encompassing the two. Ginsberg's
spirituality, then, always takes one back to the physical
world: "one wants to have visions because one thinks that
one's ordinary reality, ordinary consciousness, is not
visionary enough"(Portuges 24). In Ginsberg's "The
Trembling of the Veil," a lunar metaphor implies this
visionary quality of the ordinary: "Today out of the window
/ the trees seemed like live / organisms on the moon"(CP
14). This otherworldliness, however, is supported by
mundane, self-consciously prosaic if still beautiful detail:
"each bough extended upward / covered at the north end /
with leaves." The speaker seems amazed at the most
explainable natural phenomenon: "all the arms of the trees /
bending and straining downward / at once when the wind /
pushed them." The title of the poem also keeps one in this

world. The visionary experience is not defined as a removal of the veil, but simply as a rippling of the surface texture of reality.

Of course, Ginsberg is as interested in making splashes as rippling surfaces, as Ginsberg's brashness and popularity make him a unique figure in American poetry. Poets, artists, and cultural critics alike have most often fallen victim to the fate described by Andreas Huyssen: "mass culture, not the avant-garde, has transformed everyday life"(15). Taking Huyssen's cue that the "most promising art might combine modernism and mass culture"(43), one might look to how an Occult critique would replicate and expand the success of figures like Ginsberg. Such an approach would neither eschew mass culture as a tool of fascist or capitalist propaganda nor court pop culture as the newest site of subversion, but instead recognize how mass culture has enabled the success of certain politics in this century with Benjamin's eye "looking for weapons." How can one appropriate the recent popularity of things like Occultism[6] for the purposes of cultural critique? This latter goal rephrases the Frankfurt school's disillusionment with mere critique in echoing Nietzsche's desire while writing _Thus_

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[6]Timothy Materer, for his part, has noted the explosion of Occult and New Age book stores in America in the 1980s and wonders how this may or may not reinforce dominant ideologies(14).

Spake Zarathustra: "that somebody might make my 'truths'
appear incredible to me"(441).

Of course, my interpretation of the last passage hinges
on misapplying Nietzsche's use of the word "incredible."
For as editor Walter Kauffman states, "the most important
single clue to Zarathustra is that it is the work of an
utterly lonely man"(103). While the well-known
circumstances of Nietzsche's later life contributed to his
loneliness, it is just as fair to say that his philosophies
contribute to the loneliness of his life and work: "Far from
the market place and from fame happens all that is
great"(164). For Nietzsche, the end result of greatness is
isolation, and of course this sort of philosophy at times
drives the Modernism of Ezra Pound as well as the Frankfurt
School. And yet, the other meaning of "incredible" also
haunts Nietzsche's text, causing one to wonder if Huyssen
has another compromise for us. Is it possible for
Nietzsche's anchorless existentialism (or something equally
unpalatable to the "commodity eye" such as Marxism) to
appear incredible or exciting enough to either extinguish
its loneliness or ensure its popularity? Inasmuch as it
becomes reified as any other academic discourse--even Mike
Tyson claims to be a Marxist now--it is easy to forget that
Marxist theory (by definition) requires a measure of popular
consent to become a widely effective praxis.

Rogues Gallery: Marilyn Manson and Aleister Crowley

In his autobiography coauthored with Neil Strauss, rock star Marilyn Manson begins with one of Nietzsche's many statements about the Antichrist, a figure "whose isolation is misunderstood by the people as if it were flight from reality--while it is only his absorption, immersion, penetration into reality." This statement, along with the dually authored book, already introduces the sort of overdetermination that must accompany a discussion of popularity and subversion. Nietzsche's Antichrist appears tangential to the needs of life only to take an unguarded, oblique path right back to the heart of reality, while Marilyn Manson has stated in interviews that he always wanted to "enter the mainstream and change it from the inside." And he does appear "incredible." Photos in the book show Manson in a variety of mind-bending poses: as a worm turning into a butterfly angel; wearing a strait jacket; dressed as a witch; undergoing self scarification; and standing with Anton Lavey, head of the Church of Satan. This series, along with everything else, brings to mind a third meaning of incredible--lacking in credibility. At what point do all the attempts at shock actually shut off the brains we try to jumpstart? One is reminded of the Occultist Aleister Crowley who was not called to the stand

to answer false sodomy charges in 1911 because "Crowley might behave in such an outrageous way in the witness-box that the jury's sympathy would be alienated"(King 101). Considering the lack of success Oscar Wilde's brilliant sarcasm from the witness-box had a few years earlier, this was probably a wise judgement. In an even more shockproof era, we might ask a slightly different question: at what point does a romance with the popular implicate one in prevailing ideologies?

Any time an autobiography is coauthored with a ghost writer, it leaves one to ponder the unquantifiable percentages of effort donated by each party. The early poems of Manson reprinted in the book show no literary promise even accounting for the fact that they were written by a teenager for a horror magazine. And even the wealth of literary allusions begin to appear superfluous after a while. Strauss and Manson head a chapter of their book with a Roland Barthes quote on meat not to discuss the nature of his work Mythologies but seemingly to have an authority associated with Manson's fetishistic uses of meat. But Manson's literary credits are irrelevant to the indeterminacy which may be foregrounded by dual authorship but is actually characteristic of any subversive subject. Inevitably, as Freud and Althusser have shown with their work concerning the unconscious and its complex

relationships to material culture, this subject will exercise a variety of conflicts of consciousness. As an example, we may take a work like Ursula Le Guin's <u>The Dispossessed</u>. The science-fiction novel is written from the point of view of a young scientist, Shevek, from a communist-style planet, visiting a "propertarian" (capitalist) planet, and uses the well-traveled "fish out of water" technique to expose the absurdities of a capital society. As a subject in a capital culture, however, Le Guin inevitably slips into unconscious commodity fetishism in her choice of settings. Shevek's home planet is depicted as a desert moon where survival is very difficult while the capitalist planet is completely covered with landscape as fertile and pretty as rural New England. Despite these lapses, at least partially excused by allegorical connections to portions of the Soviet Union's geography, Le Guin's novel forces its readers to examine the horrid everyday life of a society as capitalist as the United States pretends to be.

A work like Manson's autobiography should be judged on similar terms, as the product of a well meaning but necessarily impure class consciousness. Thus his chosen name always reminds one of the violence inherent in the gloss of popular culture, the violence it may enact in its very transmission, but also the tremendous, almost

archetypal allure (symbolized by Marilyn Monroe) it may
have. While one can applaud Manson's perspicacity in
comparing brainwashing techniques (invented by Ignatius
Loyola) with children's church where "we'd be tired and they
purposelessly wouldn't give us any food so that we were
hungry and vulnerable"(21), it would be absurd to believe
that he has completely escaped complicity with hegemonic
society. But rather than questioning the authenticity of
Manson's authorship or politics, one should mechanize his
subjectivity as he does in his videos (with the help of
prosthetic devices and frenetic cuts). In other words, what
aspects of his act can be lifted out as models for critique
and what can they be recombined with? When Manson's song
"The Beautiful People" is represented in video form, for
instance, it becomes more than a satire on supermodels.
Manson's formal dress, combined with his position behind
pulpits and before large crowds, evokes fascism and its cult
of beauty. The video is edited, however, so as to evoke the
constructed nature of this beauty. Its zoetrope, flicker-
film appearance causes the actors in the video (sometimes
pulled by strings) to move like violent robots or puppets.
But the robotic aesthetic here has more than just a
satirical import. By moving beyond the limits of an
essentialist human identity (aka Marilyn Manson as sole
author of his work), the video as robotic construction (of

combined mediums and artists) works to both emotionally and intellectually convey the way that culture can work to homogenize and marginalize human bodies.

Manson himself seems to behave mechanistically with respect to the discourses he invokes. His oversimplifications of philosophy sometimes seem purposeful, cutting a bold figure with a political purpose much like one of Nietzsche's fragments. His following statement on the Antichrist, for instance, combines a tone of syncretic erudition and scholarly bluffing: "After years of studying the concept, I began to realize that the Antichrist is a character--a metaphor--who exists in nearly all religions under different names, and maybe there is some truth in it, a need for such a person"(213). This idea of a person who is concept, character, and metaphor works in the spirit of Gregory Ulmer's <u>Heuretics</u>, which recommends using a metaphorical agent to guide you through the particular questions you are trying to answer(221). For Ulmer, method actor Percival Wren becomes a locus for how personal experience can empower rhetoric. My questions, which like Ulmer's involve a desire to reinvoke politics through new rhetoric, require the brash, occult stylings of Marilyn Manson and Aleister Crowley as well as the avant-garde sensibilities of André Breton.

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Manson's Antichrist is somewhat like Nietzsche's Zarathustra, a cultural wrecking ball that culture ultimately can't do without. The Antichrist implicitly allows a culture to question itself, since historically speaking the term "Antichrist" could be substituted by "Anti-[dominant ideology]." Its roots in Revelation to the Babylonian "Dragon of Chaos"(Boussett xiii) make it a prime vehicle of disorder. The disordering, self-questioning quality can be replicated on large or small levels, as noted by a Herman Hesse quotation starting chapter 10 of Manson's book: "for however mercilessly [Nietzsche] might annihilate institutions and persons in his talk he never spared himself"(139). In recognizing its own failings, such rhetoric goes directly against the grain of fascist discourses that hide behind an irrefutable Nature or God term. It does not trade in absoluteness for timidity, but always questions the meanings behind its experimentation. Or as Manson puts it, "I sang while holding her on a leash the whole time--to make a point about our patriarchal society, of course, not because it turned me on to drag a scantily clad woman around the stage by a leather leash"(93).

The last example invokes the shock value that has always accompanied the techniques of the avant-garde--as if culture were a giant monster which needed a galvanistic

shock to life. Otherwise, society simply will not pay attention to the discomfort of the message. But to continue Huyssen's coupling of mass culture with the avant-garde, one might note how consumer culture (from rock music as a whole to an especially annoying 30 second TV commercial) has always used shock value extremely effectively. It would thus be absurd to say, as some critics have, that the avant-garde (as if it were a biologically finite entity) has lost its ability to shock. Nor should shock be merely interpreted as elitist condescension. The more outrageous the stunt Manson pulls, the more venues he is banned from performing at, the more, as David Lynch once said of Manson, he begins to look like Elvis.

Thus, what a coup it would be for the English press to label an avant-gardist "the most wicked man in the world" as it penned the Occultist Aleister Crowley.[7] Like a sine

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[7]My heuretical information on Aleister Crowley first came from a biography by his friend Charles Richard Cammell, the only one of three books in the library whose status was not "missing." It seems that Crowley, like Sylvia Plath, tends to have a very short shelf life in libraries before he is stolen by "fans." This fact makes him intriguing on the level of the popular which this chapter tries to access for the political. And yet, his library status in some ways causes him to retain a certain mystical inaccessibility, as if written material on Crowley were enigmatic as the persona he created. The information I take from Robert Anton Wilson's Masks of the Illuminati is meant to be taken in the spirit of fiction concerning an historical persona and thus as part of a factually circumspect critical persona. Two more current biographies, The Beast Demystified and Do What Thou Wilt, are more scholarly works from writers who

wave, Crowley alternated between alienating himself to unpublishability and converting outrageousness into a star status that turned heads at London parties. He is both vampiric and mischievously cupidian, chopping the fig leaves off statues and circulating rumors that nursery rhymes have Satanic power(Wilson 180, 198). His persona provides one model for an avant-garde that refuses to be ignored, one that makes the daily papers precisely because he turns people not into the traditional toad, but into camels(Wilson 111). It is unpalatable and irresistible at the same time, as evidenced even by his relationship with biographer (and friend) Charles Richard Cammell who constantly reminds readers how disgusting he finds the Occult practices that Crowley is most famous for. In his own affected form of shock, Crowley embodies the heroines described in Victorian sensational novels, further suggesting how the "feminized" depictions of 19th-century mass culture and magic actually mask elements that were subversive to patriarchal culture. Crowley's bisexuality and theatricality both further this interpretation. He is like Lady Audley in <u>Lady Audley's Secret</u>, "a craftswoman constructing an elaborate identity--a living, breathing, display-window doll"

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did not personally know Crowley. In addition to their less indignant approaches to his life, they each do a good job of tracing Crowley's influence in popular culture.

(Montweiler 43). As Occultist as Crowley may be, he trades on mass cultural elements that came to a head in the novel of sensation, a genre in which the adjectives "sensational" and "gothic" often intermingle (Goodlad 212). Unlike traditional "gothic" novels, however, sensational novels brought with their horrors a striking and oftentimes subversive "contemporaneity." Indeed, one of the primary complaints against sensational novels was that they might influence women to mimic the outlaw characteristics of their heroines. Crowley's insistence on the presence of magic in daily life, combined with his scandalous public activities, bears a similarly disturbing contemporaneity.

Cammel's sermons against Crowley sound like an advertisement, one that Crowley has devised himself, when he talks about receiving texts from Crowley which were so blasphemous he burned them after a single reading. Like a negligee which reveals more than outright nudity, Cammell's biography contributes to the Crowley aura he pretends to despise. It is an aura Crowley himself partially burst by publishing his own rituals, thus violating what Timothy Materer views as fundamental to the Occult, a combination of spiritualism and secret wisdom. According to Materer, this combination can lead to a very solipsistic mode of being: "The occultist tends to desire secret knowledge and power rather than practical virtue and ethical commitment" (61).

But secret knowledge and power can have a more openly political function also, as Walter Benjamin argues in "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction." Benjamin argues that fascist leaders retain an aura similar to the one surrounding original works of art. This aura, termed "cult value," implicitly separates people from positions of power or critique: "the cult value would seem to demand that the work of art remain hidden. Certain statues of gods are accessible only to the priest"(681). In contrast, Benjamin promotes art forms like film which are not only available to the masses but where "everybody who witnesses. . . is somewhat of an expert"(686). I would consequently argue that Crowley's publication of his rituals contributes to a general destruction of the power structures adhering to traditional methods of producing and displaying art. To continue the parallel with novels of sensation, one could argue that Crowley, like the sensational author, seeks "a reader [who] may be implicated, placed in a position of complicity with a heroine's transgressive, yet highly understandable desires"(Woman Reader). In addition to being a commercial act made possible by the increasing access to print technology, Crowley's desire to publish is a politically religious move.

Crowley, combined with Benjamin, in many ways embodies the contradictions of this dissertation's alternate title,

Occult Value in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction. But in contrast to Benjamin of "The Work of Art" essay, who argues, "that which withers in the age of mechanical reproduction is the aura of the work of art"(678), I plan to work from the premise that the mechanical age only adds to our understanding of art and politics without necessarily obliterating that which came before it. Consequently, I view the religious impulse as a psychological manifestation that the fascist governments of the early twentieth century appropriated in more effective ways than the Left. In this sense, my work follows the example of Georges Bataille who "came to see the 'religious' experience, in its broadest sense, as one fundamental to all society, although it had been repressed and nearly forgotten in modern democracies"(Stoekl 935). By extracting the "religious experience" from any specific religion, Bataille reproduces a Freudian argument on sexuality: the basic impulse is essential, but how it expresses itself changes according to social variations. When religious experience embodies the form of the Occult, however, it takes on a quality not only of psychological need but of entertainment. Thus, it seems no surprise that Bataille not only theorized this religious impulse, but (as previously mentioned) also wrote pornographic novels along the lines of the Marquis de Sade. While still meditating on the social repressions of law,

these works cater to impulses that traditional critique has avoided, thus forming a more comprehensive rhetoric. When the main characters in Story of the Eye murder a priest and sodomize him with his own eye, the story's lurid quality thus keeps the reader/spectator transfixed within its social critiques. Just as Andrew Ross calls for pornography to eroticize safe sex in No Respect: Intellectuals and Popular Culture (199), subversive critiques must package their messages memorably if they are to be adopted by more than a small elite. I believe that theorists such as Derrida have begun to use Occult imagery (among other things) in a pornographic manner that differs markedly from their earlier, more scientific diction of the late 1960s. In doing so, scientists of language have realized the unique metaphorical features of language itself and exploited them for prurient interest. Ultimately, Derrida talking about the "specters" of Marx--or Deleuze and Guattari focusing on the "vampiric" properties of Kafka--could take on an equivalent popularizing function to Carl Sagan philosophizing on the "billions and billions" of stars in the universe or Crowley arranging to be designated "the wickedest man on the earth."

Ideally, one could secretly bind together two of Jacques Derrida's books into one volume so that someone searching for either work would be referred to the same call

number. In <u>Specters of Marx,</u> Derrida suggests how only a
messianic attitude of hesitant waiting can make one aware of
the different forms a Marxist critique will take in new
economic and historical situations. Therefore, in order to
answer the collective call to arms, one must be open to a
number of Marxist ghosts, not one Marxist spirit. In
<u>Signsponge,</u> Derrida suggests one method of actually
generating such tangential simulacra. In finding the
connections between Francis Ponge's name (a pun on sponge)
and the themes of his poetry, Derrida uses a methodology
more aligned with the way Cage designed course syllabi by
generating random call numbers with the hope of producing
unexpected associations. This new volume would therefore
combine Derrida's "science of chance" with the political
edge that has always haunted deconstruction with spirits
that have been visible to some and invisible to others.
Hopefully the book would even attract those (to whom Marx
was originally sponged away by the key word "specter") who
were just interested in a good ghost story.

In <u>Masks of the Illuminati,</u> Robert Anton Wilson creates
such a story that centers on the antics of Crowley, but with
a cast of characters who would seemingly allow one to
interpret him in the proper light. Of course, there is
Albert Einstein whose scientific mind can find the rational
explanation for unusual events. Then one has James Joyce, a

writer with the creativity to appreciate Crowley yet the
consummate novelist's distrust of hocus-pocus. He speaks
disparagingly, in fact, of Occultists like Yeats who see the
world "as a spiritual adventure full of Omens and Symbols"
(172). When protagonist Sir John (an English version of the
schlemiel figure) feels suffocated by a transformation dome
Crowley has prepared, however, Joyce is willing to admit,
"We're just being expelled. . . to a new world"(329). Sir
John, in fact, represents everything that an Occult critic
might wish to avoid. He is simultaneously the most naive
character in the book and the most enslaved to Occultism.
Investing massive amounts of time and energy into spiritual
enlightenment, Sir John is also the most susceptible to
Crowley's nursery rhyme jokes. Ironically, John dismisses
people like Joyce and Crowley as libertines who can not tell
right from wrong(314). This judgmental attitude grows more
insidious in John's associates, most notably in Reverend
Verey's account of a "sinister Oriental gentleman"(157) who
haunts his town and accompanies a string of mysterious
events. With this revelation, Wilson seems to equate pat
judgments either for or against the Occult with the
oversimplified prejudices that Said critiques in
Orientalism.

In contrast, one might attempt to create a critical
space which resembles Crowley's own magical surroundings.

Crowley's poetry may be, as biographer Cammel describes it,
a few gems amongst a mountain of doggerel(199), but maybe
that is why Crowley was drawn to mountain climbing.
Theoretical physicists commonly sift through their own
version of doggerel, opening to random places in their
textbooks to try and find just one new correlation between
"unrelated" theories. This connection is not merely
fortuitous, for in true Surrealist fashion Crowley claims to
seek "the path that unites mysticism and rationalism"(Wilson
270), and when Crowley felt the mysticism growing too
strong, he majored in organic chemistry at Cambridge: "I
needed some work in hard science to bring me down to
earth"(280). But this particular "scientific" method
resembles Crowley's goal in meditation "to escape the
devastating delusion that an intellectual image is an
universal truth"(Cammel xviii). This would be a form of
possession, being possessed by a single image, and in Masks
of the Illuminati possession is countered, interestingly
enough, through bibliomancy, "the art of receiving divine
guidance by opening the Bible at random, sticking in a
finger, and reading the verse so discovered"(Wilson 123).
So religious impulse need not resemble a superficial alchemy
in its search for a single endpoint. As Allen Ginsberg puts
it in "The Terms in Which I Think of Reality"(CP 50),
"absolutely Eternity / changes! Cars are always / going

down the street, / lamps go off and on." Ginsberg's choice
of urban imagery as opposed to Wallace Stevens' more
naturalistic representation of Eternity (in "Sunday
Morning") emphasizes the notion of philosophical reality
being a construction, not a deterministic trait of nature.
This view of the mechanical, changeable nature of reality
does not imply unengaged passivity, but instead allows
Ginsberg "to distinguish process / in its particularity with
an eye to the initiation / of gratifying new changes /
desired in the real world." Likewise, an interest in the
Occult need not appear naive or eccentric but can instead
partake of what Materer describes as a "suspensive,
postmodern irony"(3) whose lack of resolution adds to the
complexity of literary critique.

What Now?

Many of these Occult complexities, in fact, have been
expressed in the work of postmodern writers. Perhaps one of
the most credulous of these authors, James Merrill, is
interesting to the extent that even his work utilizes irony.
The Changing Light at Sandover, an epic account of his
experiments with Ouija boards, doesn't present a total
retreat to the spirit world, but embodies a complex layering
of histories. In lines as simple as "The doorbell rings.
Our doorbell here in Athens"(558), Merrill illustrates how

mixing two histories creates a third, impure history full of
dialectical images.[8] In this passage near the end of the
poem, in fact, the guest interrupts an Ouija session.
Vasíli has just lost his lover, who happens to be
"present"(Merrill's quotations) at the house. When Merrill
and company move to end the game out of respect, Vasíli asks
for "Anything, *anything* to keep his head / Above the sucking
waves, merely to listen"(559). As the game proceeds, the
head spirit Ephraim reveals that Vasíli has a special
communion with the dead. This crisis and resolution at the
poem's end seems to be a call for "mixed" company, for
interruption and blending that mirror the Ouija game itself:

> Too much went whizzing past. We were too nice
> To pause, divide the alphabetical
> Gibberish into words and sentences.
> Yet even the most fragmentary message--
> Twice as entertaining, twice as wise
> As either of its mediums--enthralled them.(7)

In this passage, Merrill gives us not a vision of Occultism
as a form of enslavement, but as a way of accessing a
Surrealist or Dadaist bliss of chance. This bliss is not to
be disregarded, as George Bataille finds a Utopian element
in it: "I believe that we freely overcome the major
difficulties involved in the individual's opposition to the

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[8]Benjamin defines the "dialectical image" in the
Arcades Project, as one that comprises two time periods.
Coming from the past, it forms a meaningful constellation
with the present(462).

collective. . . by a stroke of chance, obtained in the boldness of play"(qtd. in Botting 335). Chance, as Bataille envisions it, is the very element that breaks the rigidity of categories, and as Merrill's Ouija board is a game played by two people at once, it is "twice as wise" as either since it is the result of a collaboration that disrupts the habitualized passageways of individual consciousness. Merrill's poem is "twice as wise in one more way as well," for by dealing with the complex psychoanalytic needs for both the material and immaterial, his poem "is anything but asepticized"(Materer 158) in a way that can't be said about a wholly Occult or a wholly secular poem.

In his story cycle Castle of Crossed Destinies, Italo Calvino also expresses (in a less credulous fashion) a will to disruption. Its premise is that many travelers lost in an enchanted wood find themselves gathered in a castle. Strangely, they are all struck dumb and can only communicate through manipulating a pack of tarot cards they find on a table. Thus, this handicap disrupts the travelers' abilities to tell their stories to one another, but the new "language" presents its own wealth of possibilities. The narrator of this story finds himself in a state of "enforced promiscuity"(4) which lends itself to multiple forms of collaborative and chance-based interpretation. As if trying to simulate the sense of randomness in a pack of cards, the

narrator continually finds himself using phrases such as,
"There was no deceiving ourselves that matters had gone
otherwise"(10). Due to the silence of the castle, the
narrator must also continually choose between allegorical
and literal readings of the cards' images, whether to make
general or detailed reference to the cards' ornateness. The
cards subsequently become not so much a text to be
interpreted as a site designed for irrational enlargement.[9]
This expanded manner of reading the tarot deck provides
combinations that are seemingly endless as "each story runs
into another story, and as one guest is advancing his strip,
another, from the other end, advances in the opposite
direction"(Calvino 41). Multidirectional, always shuffling,
this method of storytelling exists on the margins of more
closed forms of logic. I first noticed Calvino's book at a
store because it stuck out further than any of the other
paper back books--to make room for illustrations of the
tarot cards in the margins.

I would like to use such marginal critical spaces, both
mechanical and magical, to replicate Crowley's claim to have

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[9]Irrational enlargement is a classic Surrealist technique
that involves asking questions about an object which are not
normally considered part of valid criticism. The idea is to
extend beyond the frame of the work itself to find its
emotional or irrational qualities. For a more extended
discussion on how André Breton performs such a procedure on
the Star Card in the tarot deck, see chapter 7.

once passed through a group of fascists unseen by directing
their attention to a random object(Cammel 164). These
spaces may be, as Joyce terms them in Wilson's novel,
artificial "shaman's tricks," but they are also (in the
novel's terms) tricks which give Joyce and Einstein the
respective germs of _Ulysses_ and relativity(352-3). While my
claims for what I want to discover about Eliot, Yeats, and
Pound in the following chapters are more modest, I hope to
use similar shaman's tricks in my investigation. Thus, the
methods I have chosen for interrogating the politics of the
three poets come from the two Occult practices which have
the highest element of mathematical chance involved. For,
unlike Felix Planer who derides the irrationality of chance-
based divinations because they are unlikely to produce the
same information twice(70), I find this unpredictability to
be the key to their fascination, both emotionally and
politically. Just as Italo Calvino[10] comments that his
obsession with tarot cards led him to finally view them as
"a machine for constructing stories"(126), I wish to see how
they may be used as a machine for constructing criticism.

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[10]Calvino's status as a member of the Oulipo or "potential
literature" movement is instructive here. This group
conducts literary experiments involving complex mathematical
constraints that often produce unpredictable results.
Raymond Queneau's "100,000,000,000,000" Sonnets, for
instance, is composed of 10 sonnets the lines of which, due
to their similar rhyme scheme, can be combined at will.

Using Tarot cards to formulate questions about Eliot and Yeats and the I-Ching to discuss the Pisan Cantos, I hope to create a mechanical Occult that will, much like the techniques used by physicists, Surrealists, Oulipians, and magicians, send my interrogations down lanes I wouldn't have taken without such techniques. This interest in the machine and its ability to reduce human control (and thus human habit) will cause me to eschew practices such as the Ouija board which rely on the stasis of the alphabet (the letters are always on the board in the same order) and a belief in higher, directing powers. Hopefully, this methodology will not only provide new ideas concerning the poets I am interested in, but also inspire professors and critics to follow a shift towards the popular anticipated not only in the Occult imagery of Derrida's <u>Specters of Marx</u>, but in the sort of irresistably shocking spaces that Aleister Crowley inhabited. His most famous home, found "by chance" (Cammel 45) in an excursion through Scotland and eventually purchased by Jimmy Page of the rock group Led Zeppelin, often caused the visitors it attracted to faint or grow overcome with dizziness.

And so, the last reason I use these techniques results from a dizzy fascination with the mystery of the Occult. My attitude towards this approach is both ironic and sympathetic, like Jane Austen's perspective towards the

Gothic books she satirizes in <u>Northanger Abbey</u>: "Even
[Austen] occasionally opens a dark cupboard, lets in a
Gothic ghost"(Drabble xix). The desire to partake of a
popular commodity without acknowledging its authority seems
to be suggested by the traditional myth of Occult
attraction. In <u>Foucault's Pendulum</u>, the main characters
acknowledge this attraction by wanting to economically
capitalize on it. They plan to publish a series of books
entitled "Isis Unveiled" because "It has Tunkhamen in it,
the scarab of the Pyramids. Isis Unveiled, with a slightly
black-magical cover, but not overdone"(220). There is a
certain childlike fascination with the fantastic--a bit
overdecorated, a bit pornographic--but a fascination
nonetheless that cannot be confined, as the publishers of
Isis Unveiled discover, to the left, the right, or the
"Imperial Nationalist State"(264-5). And yet, high culture
itself can be as genteel as Charles Lamb or as sensational
as Dante's <u>Inferno</u>, as so-called sensational novels remind
us(Flint 283). Because this realm of myth (and mythical
realm) is so receptive to all kinds of appropriation, I find
it all the more intriguing as a way of reinvigorating the
ambiguities of the High Modernist poets. In Chapter 3, I
will present an unlikely and disturbing framing of the
politics of Pound, Eliot, and Yeats, one that will be
reexamined via the Occult critique of the latter chapters.

CHAPTER 3
HIGH MODERNISM AND HOLLYWOOD IN DEEP FOCUS

Introduction

It may at first seem absurd to assert any affinities between the Hollywood studio system and the literary practices of those writers associated with high modernism. The primary aesthetic debates among the left in the 20s and 30s, which centered on the opposition between literary realism and modernist experimentation, would not necessarily even consider the relatively new art form of film. Theorists like Ernst Bloch and Theodor Adorno championed avant-garde aesthetics while George Lukacs emphasized the necessity of a realist literature designed to expose the "not immediately perceptible network of relationships that go to make up society"(qtd. in Jameson 38).[1] But in truth, these opposing schools of thought still express a commitment to the ideology of realism, one that makes film studies particularly suited to exploring the similar goals of the two schools.

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[1]The Jameson book I refer to, <u>Aesthetics and Politics</u>, actually collects the full texts of these debates, including essays and letters by such figures as Lukacs, Bloch, Brecht, Adorno, and Benjamin, among others.

In his polemic against the theories of George Lukacs, for instance, Bertolt Brecht also champions a form of realism that he defines in almost identical terms: "Realistic means: discovering the causal complexes of society"(qtd. in Jameson 82). Of course, Brecht's experimental "epic theatre," with its various stratagems for breaking the escapist frames of bourgeois entertainment, directly flouts the sort of novel that Lukacs espouses. These are two Marxists with the same goals but radically different ideas of how to achieve them. But in this long-running debate, even the insults sound the same, for Adorno critiques Lukacs' organicist defense of realism as a conceptualization that "derives its norms from a bourgeois consciousness"(qtd. in Jameson 156) while Lukacs accuses modernists of treating history as a jumble sale(Jameson 55).

In discussing these equivocations, I do not mean to trivialize the Marxist debate over aesthetics but to suggest that terms like "realism" and "modernism" have always been vexed and for that matter should always remain so. By refusing to set boundaries on these concepts, one may be more open to see their intertwinings and affinities. Another opposition best held in suspense for the purposes of this chapter involves the categories of high and popular culture. Even Adorno, famous for his critiques of the culture industry, admits to Benjamin, "Both [high and low

art] bear the stigmata of capitalism, both contain elements of change"(qtd. in Jameson 123). This assertion holds even more true today as modernist opposition has turned into the dominant style of commodity production(209)[2] and consequently reminds us of the foresight those theorists (including both Lukacs and the Frankfurt school) employed while insisting that oppositional Marxists learn the bourgeois tricks of the trade. The bourgeoisie has learned theirs.

With these intertwinings in mind, I will focus on Classic Hollywood as an institution that participates in the same general episteme as High Modernism. And, although the practices of the modernist era Hollywood studio represents only one way in which films can be made, Classic Hollywood's dominance demands explorations of how its aesthetics affect contemporary media such as Modernist literature. As I look to some of the most characteristic procedures perfected in the studio era for the purposes of securing markets, I try not make judgments of quality--which Andreas Huyssen associates with a fear of contamination by mass culture (ix)-- but instead, I try to foreground strains of modernism

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[2]To take an example from the theorists discussed thus far, one might note the television show <u>Frazier</u> and its use of Brechtian intertitles. Whatever their disruptive purposes might have been, such intertitles are rendered anodyne by the constant disruptive practices of television commercials.

reproduced by Hollywood and the High Modernists. Furthermore, the dissertation as a whole attempts to take a dialectical approach to modernism--hence the mystical/ material duality in one of the dissertation's working titles, "The Occult Value in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction." This chapter thus develops a more negative view of Hollywood and the modernists as a way of isolating problems which the latter chapters attempt to explore through more experimental means.

One might see a parallel (in the focus, not the tone) between the negative dialectics of this chapter and Theodor Adorno's writings on what he and Horkheimer call the "Culture Industry." Horkheimer and Adorno's thesis in this particular chapter of <u>Dialectic of Enlightenment</u> is both withering and extreme. With statements such as, "Under monopoly all mass culture is identical, and the lines of its artificial framework begin to show through"(121) and "Something is provided for all so that none may escape"(123), the two authors establish a stance that is as hyperbolic in its critique of mass culture as Sartre is critical of unengaged literature. Adorno, however, has traditionally taken the most heat for this type of hyperbole, thanks to his critics' allegiances to both pop and the proletariat. Still, if both Sartre and Adorno are prone to such extreme argument, one might be led to ask what

purpose it serves. Fredric Jameson, for instance, rightly notes that Adorno's essays on popular music critique it unfairly by focusing on its most reactionary forms(107), but if this sort of critique really does take a dialectical form, Adorno's polemics can have a mine-sweeping effect that specifies reactionary aesthetic practices while foregrounding those practices which do not fit the mold.

In other words, this chapter enacts a Marxist critique that bears affinities with Adorno's and Sartre's approaches inasmuch as all three resemble the narrowness of scientific paradigms defined by Thomas Kuhn. While his book The Structure of Scientific Revolution implicitly questions the truth value of science by focusing on the limitations of scientific paradigms, Kuhn also explicitly affirms that the more exact a paradigm may be, the more it tends to allow the detection of anomalies that lead to further scientific discoveries(65). Likewise, the somewhat limited scope of this chapter is designed to isolate some of those aesthetic practices that correspond to the reactionary politics of Pound, Yeats, and Eliot. By looking to the "scars of capitalism" born by both Hollywood and High Modernism, I do not mean to disparage one art form at the expense of the other, but to take the same dispassionate attitude toward ideological critique as the famous detector of forgeries Gustave Morelli took to the issue of attribution. Morelli's

studies of toes and ears painted by "the Masters" made Edgar
Wind exclaim, "Any art gallery studied by Morelli begins to
resemble a rogue's gallery"(Ginzburg 97). The philologist
Morelli's method of detecting artistic forgeries and
misattributions surely reduced the possible meanings of
painting, but by doing so he made some amazing discoveries
about them.

But the other specter that haunts any aesthetic
analysis (including my own) is the ghost of metaphoricity.
It is always tempting (and perhaps inevitable) to resort to
metaphor when attempting to connect one social practice to
another. When not making extreme claims in "The Culture
Industry," Horkheimer and Adorno use the analogical method
of argument in delineating "The Concept of Enlightenment."
The entire Sirens episode from Homer's <u>Odyssey</u>, in fact,
becomes symbolic of the "entanglement of myth, domination,
and labor"(32), a strange focal point for the discussion of
Enlightenment's relationship to the maturity of Capitalism
and the rise of Fascism. The allegory proceeds by
distinguishing between Odysseus' men (who survive the Sirens
by plugging their ears) and Odysseus who is allowed to hear
the Sirens but must be tied to the mast in order to retain
his sense of self. Thus, both parties are caught in the
system of enlightenment which has given rise to the modern
Capitalist state, and "with the technical easing of life the

persistence of domination brings about a fixation of the
instincts by means of heavier repression"(35). Here,
Horkheimer and Adorno could be accused of oversimplifying
issues not through hyperbole, but through allegory. It is
extremely questionable to what extent something written
during Homer's time can adequately explain 20th-Century
economic theory. And yet, it is an extremely powerful and
memorable image, not necessarily of the Capitalist state
itself, but of the means by which Horkheimer and Adorno will
explain it. In <u>Dialectic of Enlightenment</u>, as in my own
chapter, the very methods which limit the argument also
empower its position as boundary work.

And, inasmuch as my argument does resort to metaphor,
it will also draw on the Althusserian tradition. The first
advantage of this approach is that it recognizes both the
interdependence and the autonomy of various social
levels(Smith 157), including the economic, the
technological, the social, and the cultural levels. This
paradoxical set of relationships does not suggest that one
look at cultural products merely to reach the technological
base, but that one should chart relationships between
various institutions. Althusser also accounts for the
metaphorical relationships between these institutions
through his concept of overdetermination, which he borrows
from Freud(160). In Freudian terms, an event is

overdetermined when more than one event contributes to its
meaning. When Freud's definition is combined with a
materialist historiography, any event or image (whether it
occurs in a dream, a poem, or a film) will be the result of
transformations involving various mixtures of condensation
and displacement. This methodology is not only extremely
enabling in opening up readings of the superstructure (hence
its stated and implicit popularity with cultural studies),
but also points to one of the Marxist blind spots which
Sartre points to: "for Sartre Marxists have had no use for
Freud because they have consistently neglected the
importance of childhood in the formation of adult
identity"(Jameson 216).[3] And so by looking to Freud,
Althusser's enabling method does not simplify cultural
analyses by reiterating a traditional theory of cultural
reflection, but instead complicates materialism by promoting
a "'differential historicity' based upon the
overdetermination of the parts [which may include the
formation and maintenance of identity] and the whole"(Smith
161). By thus introducing more variables into his analyses,
the historical materialist adds more subtlety (and
uncertainty) to his conclusions. One is reminded, in fact,

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[3]Walter Benjamin would be another notable exception,
particularly in <u>Charles Baudelaire: A Lyric Poet in the Age
of High Capitalism</u>.

of Freud's case studies, in which analyses proceed by a tortuous combination of bold assertions and doubtful retreats. Dialectically speaking, the conceptual "leaps" implicit in a metaphorical (i.e., Freudian) analysis of images ultimately return to the concept of probabilities which motivates Michel Foucault's rich and difficult texts.

But given these limitations and opportunities, why should Hollywood film prove a revealing entry into the poetics of these figures? To begin with, film has perhaps been more paradoxical than any other aesthetic practice in terms of its dialectic between progressive and conservative features. On one hand, film-makers have confronted the possibilities of chance events more than artists of any other art form. Not only can almost anything happen on the open (out-of-doors, unregulated) sets of early cinema, but the camera inevitably picked up more through the lens than the human eye could detect. Presented with this inherent open, unpredictable quality, one could argue that film as a form lends itself to revolutionary uses. Tom Gunning's definition of early cinema as a "cinema of attractions"(58) for instance, suggests that film has always tended toward non-narrative moments typically associated with avant-garde cinema. Such attractions have a disruptive force that made the Surrealists great fans of film. André Breton was one of the more poetic spokesmen for the need to "derail the mind,"

and avant-gardes in general have found the unpredictable
nature of chance the most effective means of doing so. On
the other hand, Classic Hollywood continually attempted to
reduce the chance elements in its films, since such elements
would by their very nature derail the system Noël Burch has
called the Institutional Mode of Representation (IMR) and
its goal of creating the seamless, 90-minute filmic novel.[4]
This type of film helped create both a stable film audience
and a major economic barrier to entry (such a film being
incredibly expensive). Consequently, one finds within the
history of film technology and Hollywood a dialectic between
the urge to use open avant-garde forms and a more
reactionary desire to control production. This dialectic, I
would argue, provides a revealing model for how the high
modernist poets may absorb an extremely complex array of
materials but in fact reduce the dialogic properties of
their work by eliminating chance from their methods of
assemblage. Complexity alone does not guarantee progressive

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[4]The IMR of course had to be institutionalized, though its
current invisibility attests to its ubiquity. When
continuity rules are broken (such as the 180 degree field of
vision rule, eyeline matching, and the centered frame, to
name a few), the disruption of convention is extremely
noticeable and can even be confusing to viewers. Many of
these conventions are implicitly based on the success of the
realist novel perfected in the Victorian era. Thus, Walter
Benjamin's critique of those who compare film (in "The Work
of Art" essay) to past art forms should be directed towards
the producers of cinema as well as its critics.

art or politics, for in reality there are few undertakings (including poetic ones) more complex than producing a Hollywood feature film. James R. Beniger in fact argues for the exact opposite relationship in <u>The Control Revolution</u>. According to Beniger, the more complex and structurally differentiated various industries grew, the more centrally controlled they had to become(257). This control always looked in two directions--outward to greater inclusiveness and inward to greater specificity. On the microcosmic level, it could involve anything from the Taylorist assumption that the employer must take control of his worker's movements(Knapp 7) to the Ford Service Department's attempts to monitor every aspect of its employees' lives (Smith 54). In terms of industrial expansion, crises of control always occurred when the desire to create new markets threw mass production and distribution out of balance(Beniger 220). If one accepts the pervasiveness of control argued for by these critics (Beniger even has a chapter on control as a dominant feature of human evolution), then even within the avant-garde, escape from this control may be more the exception than the rule.

In light of these historical tendencies, a more relevant political criterion for both film and poetics may not involve opposing terms such us complexity/simplicity or realism/modernism, but instead might require asking how an

artist confronts complexity in his or her work. In film, the (French) term for this confrontation is découpage--the piecing together of film fragments into the "finished" product. According to film scholar Noël Burch, the Hollywood studio system developed very specific codes for how découpage worked in any given film. Or in more broadly economic terms, these studio practices helped create what James Beniger calls a "closed system" programmed so as to prevent unexpected inputs(111). In the modern era, restrictive procedural codes (such as the IMR) embodied the values of the managerial class which organized "mass production, mass distribution, and mass consumption into practical, commercial and, to a degree, socially viable systems"(Smith 42). Inasmuch as Hollywood operated (through controls in the studio, editing, camera set-up, and the star system) in line with industries of the modern era, then restriction paradoxically served the interests of economic expansion. By the 1930s, the closure implied by the Institutional Mode of Representation helped ensure Hollywood's dominance not only at home but abroad, where the shadow of fascism grew over Europe.

But one could argue that Hollywood was not merely typical of modern industry, but one of the consummate industries of modernity, even protypical of many issues in postmodern economics. Despite the relative variety of films

as compared to Model-T Fords, Hollywood adopted Fordist models of assembly-line labor division in all aspects of film making.[5] This efficiency combined with a forward-looking vertical integration of supply-side (film production) and demand-side (distribution and marketing) elements of the film industry. These early practices began to coalesce in the 1930s when "studios were meshing into a vast interlocking system"(198) of international influence that made them resemble contemporary multinational corporations in their effects if not in their organizing principles.[6] Yet, inasmuch as Hollywood's structure and methodologies adapted to diversified markets, it mimicked the post-Fordist economic system that "has been conducive to massive mergers and corporate diversifications"(Harvey 158). Whether a prophetic version of Fordism developed from an identity crisis that encouraged these particular forms of growth, as Jean Luc Godard suggests(Orr 6), or whether film as a medium has certain inherently postmodern properties that almost from the start expressed themselves both

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[5]The following information concerning Hollywood's relationship to modernist industry comes from Thomas Schatz's The Genius of the System.

[6]The apparent diversication of Universal into horror pictures, Warner Brothers into gangster flicks and musicals, and MGM into A pictures and star ensembles, for instance, actually reduced competition amongst the studios and allowed a greater, more efficient coverage of foreign markets.

formally and economically, Hollywood's ideological industry
was simultaneously global and peculiar.

For the purpose of my particular literary critique, I
will begin by comparing some of the more entrenched features
of Hollywood's Institutional Mode of Representation with the
poetic practices of the high modernists in order to explore
specific relationships between their aesthetic moves and
their reactionary ideologies. As I've suggested, Classic
Hollywood's novel ubiquity provides a compelling
justification for exploring these relationships. Inasmuch
as Hollywood's methods of production resemble a Fordist
ethic, they align themselves with a broader move towards
"total mechanization" that Siegfried Giedion locates from
the years 1918-1939, a time when mechanization "impinged
upon the very center of the human psyche, through all the
senses"(42). But if Hollywood was the most influential
technology (for both psychological and economic reasons),
then everyone, even and especially the artist, was to some
degree[7] complicit with its particular version of
mechanization. In risking these broader historical claims,
one implicitly rejects reading the "political exploits" of
figures like Pound as "unfortunate aberrations of purely

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[7]Though the influence can at times be incredibly obvious, as
in Edward Hopper's paintings which project the aura of film
stills.

biographical interest"(Hewitt 1) and instead attempts to delineate the historical conditions that help give rise to specific dispositions and acts. And, according to Charney and Schwartz in Cinema and the Invention of Modern Life, cinema "must be reunderstood as a vital component of a broader culture of modern life which encompassed political, social, economic, and cultural transformations" not because it caused them all, but because "these elements created sufficient epistemological pressure to produce cinema"(10). Thus, even if a modernist writer never saw a single Hollywood film, he or she was inevitably influenced by the forces which came together to produce cinema.

It is important, however, to remember just how complex any textually produced ideology can be. In Criticism and Ideology, Terry Eagleton asserts that any literary act occurs as an intersection of general, authorial, and aesthetic ideologies. These mutually influencing thought patterns are in turn influenced by a culture's general mode of production and literary mode of production. By considering all these factors, Eagleton emphasizes not a cause and effect argument, but asserts that all these areas mutually reproduce one another(60). In doing so, he (along with Althusser) articulates a system which echoes the depth-oriented categories of base and superstructure, conscious and unconscious while simultaneously anticipating the more

postmodern concept of Marxist critique as a mapping of relationships between multiple surfaces. But in addition to stressing all the factors that enter into a literary act, Eagleton gives clues as to how one may use these concepts to deal with individual literary texts. First of all, Eagleton insists that a text does not express ideology, but produces it(64). Consequently, one does not read ideology directly from a text but finds it embodied in the way any text is put together. What happens in the text, the "textual real," is "dissolved, displaced, condensed and conflated by the demands of textual ideology"(76). This latter terminology suggests the need for a close reading of the text's details in order to find these moments of transformation. Such a reading method, as previously mentioned, will inevitably proceed in the tentative style of Freud's analyses, placing elements in momentary equivalence to see what sort of information yields. This information may not correspond to an historical real so much as the meaning of transformation itself. As Eagleton notes in his analogy between Freud's work and Marxist literary critique, "the analyst's task is not only to lay bare the meaning of a distorted text, but to expose the meaning of text-distortion itself"(90).

Because studio era Hollywood was forced to deal pragmatically with issues of capital in relationship to controlling both products and markets, it forms a revealing

insight into the ideologies influencing all individuals of the modernist era, including its poets. I would argue, in fact, that various attempts by the high modernists to delineate the relevant elements of Western culture (Eliot in his prose, Pound in the Cantos, and Yeats in A Vision) present an ideological equivalent to Hollywood's attempted saturation of the entertainment market. To assume that writers are somehow immune to such influence would affirm the most clichéd myth of mind against body used to oppose high modernism to modernity's "tawdry cheapness"(Knapp 2). In direct contrast to such artificial division between high culture and popular culture, Timothy Murray argues that the ubiquity of mass cultural products presents "the possibility that the specialized codes of cinema can themselves become, or always already are, 'naturalized' or 'cultural'"(3). Therefore, while the specific transformations performed by Hollywood studios do not directly correspond to the work of Pound, Yeats, and Eliot, they can provide models of the types of transformations occurring in their poetry. The strength of Murray's book, in fact, stems from his focus on how specific works of artists and philosophers use the language of cinema, oftentimes with a surprising lack of distance. Furthermore, the similarities between Eagleton's definition of textual ideology and the filmic concept of découpage may suggest aesthetic affinities that obviate the

differences in media. In order to tease out some of these affinities and their relationship to larger political and economic contexts, however, I deliberately choose moments that enact these poets' ideologies concerning control and chance.

Ezra Pound: Cinematic Matching and Economic Coverage

In this section, I would like to draw connections between Classic Hollywood shot-matching techniques and the economic views in Ezra Pound's Cantos. These connections should prove intriguing precisely because the fragmented, avant-garde appearance of The Cantos seems so different from the seamless matching of film shots designed to give the viewer "an immediate and constant sense of orientation" (Burch 10) that simulates his or her experience of everyday life. But just as the filmic rules of matched shots historically "became more and more firmly fixed [eyeline matching, shot-reverse-shot, 180 degree rule]"(11), limiting the ways a film could be put together, Pound's insistent views on the circulation of money mediate the dialogic possibilities of his massive epic. In a way, both aesthetic practices ultimately enact an element of control and related economic goals reminiscent of the Fordist/Taylorist ideals of efficiency dominating American thought in the modernist period. For Hollywood, it began with Carl Laemmle's

"scientifically balanced system" of film making and continued with Irving Thalberg's legacy of connecting efficient production to expansive marketing(Schatz 20-2). Pound's early alignment with such ideology can be found in his desire to blur the categories of aesthete and businessman and in his fascination with the aesthetic possibilities of the machine(Knapp 36,49).

But Pound was not alone in opening up his artistic practice to the seductions of mechanization. In Mechanization Takes Command, Siegfried Giedion states how in the 19th and 20th centuries, "the essence of the phenomenal world has been increasingly regarded as motion-process"(28). This is the first step to viewing the world as a mechanical system that can be controlled, a view shared by scientists, mathematicians, philosophers, and artists alike. French physiologist E.J. Marey pioneered motion studies from 1860-1900, and his goal to chart "movement in all its form" (Giedion 18) (through a panoply of graphing methods) eerily echoes the writerly impulses of Ezra Pound in The Cantos: "And that [Pius II] did among other things / Empty the fonts of the chiexa of holy water / And fill up the same full with ink"(44). Pound calls this act a "profound indication"(45) because the act allegorizes his own goal for his writing to be a holy act that encompasses the masses, not just describing the world but allowing it to describe itself. As

his subjects come by and unwittingly dip their fingers in the "holy" ink, Pound can record their movements through the world in a scientific manner. He therefore wants to introduce a "method" or "experiment" for recording the pulse of his age, a goal that differs from the photographic motion studies of Edweard Muybridge only in the medium, not in the general mechanizing impulse.

This connection between a generally mechanized history of motion studies and Pound's work is important because, in the modernist era, everyone from Chanel to Gramsci defined modernism as the elimination of "waste": "A forced selection will inevitably take place; a part of the old working class will be pitilessly eliminated from the world of labor"(Gramsci qtd. in Wollen 37). This rather joyful description alludes to the most haunting point that Peter Wollen makes about Taylorism and Fordism, that these industrial systems ended up becoming world views affecting actual bodies. It is as if, like Marey's "'photographic gun' to follow flying seagulls"(Giedion 21), these methods of control carry an implicit violence. As Knapp points out, the fascist state, like American capitalism, was another culmination of Taylorist thought(50). But if Nazi policies on the Jews were partly based on misapplied Fordist efficiency (though Ford too was an anti-Semite), the will to efficiency in aesthetics must too be tested for sinister

echoes. Ultimately then, I hope to suggest how Hollywood and Pound use very different aesthetic means to achieve related goals connected to both the benign and sinister manifestations of the machine age. While classical Hollywood could be described as overtly efficient and dormantly fascist, Pound expressed an overt fascism even as his unwieldy <u>Cantos</u> enacted an indirect allegiance with scientific management.

In the case of Classic Hollywood, efficiency hinges on the standardized elimination of chance from the processes of filmmaking and audience reception. Film scholar Nöel Burch defines artistic chance as the "intrusion of natural contingencies" into the work of art(105). Inasmuch as a Hollywood film is concerned, such contingencies can prove destructive to its central goal--"to make discontinuity imperceptible"(11). Such a film must not only prove seamless in its movement from shot to shot, but also in the structures of a realistic storyline and identification with the main characters. Despite the broad output of films in the Classic Hollywood era, the procedures for narrative presentation were fairly codified. Whether the film was a hardboiled Hemingway adaptation like <u>The Killers</u> or an MGM ensemble piece like <u>Grand Hotel</u>, the sequence of establishing shots, mid-range shots, and eyeline matching were pretty standard for almost any type of story. For the

most part, each scene had to further the main narrative in some way. The radical (and at times barely comprehensible) appearance of many films by Jean Luc Godard, in fact, often results from his merely rearranging or even just leaving out certain elements of these habitual codes. To help preserve these codes, Hollywood conventionalized the use of multiple cameras in any given take so as to capture the most compelling yet seamless angle on any scene. This method, along with the shot-reverse-shot editing style, was a way of "enveloping actors on all sides"(114) so as always to make available a shot suited to the interweaving of the plot and the actor's persona. These editing methods not only helped standardize the film industry, but also formally enacted the ideological goals of Hollywood studios--to create films that would disqualify independent competitors and thus capture the aesthetic expectations of the largest audiences possible. This "invisible style" operated in the same spirit as the pace of industrialization as a whole, and the "speed of such industrial transformation made it appear magical"(Charney and Schwartz 17). The arbiters of the silver screen were alchemists in their desire to create, secure, saturate, and ultimately control the most expansive and lucrative markets they could.

My point in connecting this admittedly reductionist view of Classic Hollywood with Pound's work is to suggest

how the Cantos, while they do not appear seamless, at
several moments run counter to Marjorie Perloff's
designation of the poem as "dadaist, quintessentially
open"(177) and actually align themselves more closely with
the dominant ideologies driving Hollywood film making.
These formal and thematic limitations imply that the Cantos'
vast assemblage of materials (much like Hollywood's use of
multiple cameras or Thalberg's desire to cover both
production and reception) serve Pound's desires for
saturation and coverage rather than for ideological variety.
Thus, Pound may seek for his world views the poetic
equivalent of market hegemony that Classic Hollywood
achieved in the film industry, a supposition not out of line
with his infamously rude attempts to regulate the aesthetics
of the emerging modernist canon. As well as citing Michael
Tratner's argument that modernist experimentation stems from
an attempt to write in the crowd's language, I also allude
to the proposition of Marx and Engels that "intellectual
production changes in character and proportion as material
production is changed"(102). While Harvey and others go on
to suggest the problematic nature of positing a single
"material force," my particular reading of Pound takes
Marx's and Engel's assertion as an heuristic for exploring
how his poem formally expresses a sympathy with the market
forces it pretends to critique. But in order to do so, I

will look to symptomatic moments and structures in the poem
where one may see evidence of Althusser's description of
ideology as "a system of representation" working on the
level of the unconscious(233-5).

Of course, the main subject of the _Cantos_ foregrounds
the mutually enforcing nature of various ideological levels,
for in Pound's poem the circulation of money acts as the
main referent and the dominant metaphor. Specifically,
Pound is fixated with the proper value and use of money.
Following it throughout various histories and cultures, he
chases the "dollar" with all the fervor of a Louis B. Mayer
even if he does so in a more sublimated, less self-centered
manner. Pound's main enemy is Usury, which he defines as "A
charge for the use of purchasing power, levied without
regard to production"(_Cantos_ 230). In other words, Pound
despised banking practices which focus on the manipulation
of money alone, which "prosper by creating shortages"(Kenner
427). Pound felt sensitive to such shortages because they
tended especially to hurt the arts, a wound he felt acutely
as an artist and sponsor of artists. In his famous Canto
XLV, Pound laments, "with usura / hath no man a painted
paradise on his church wall"(229). Instead, one has Railway
Arch 25 where the sculptor Gaudier once "woke up to find
himself inundated with rain and lying in several inches of
water"(Kenner 251).

While Pound has personal reasons for calling attention to the antagonism between art and the economy, the historical paragons of art he cites reveal an art that survives because it reinforces general ideology. In Canto XLV, the very poem where Pound attacks Usura, the "painted paradise" alludes to the Renaissance patronage system where most artistic commissions involved a representation of dominant myth. Just as Hollywood editing favors a seamless continuity of narrative, these artists furthered the narrative of seamless Christianity. So "where virgin receiveth message / and halo projects from incision"(229), one may sense a tentative circularity among Pound's aesthetics, general ideology, and a film *projector*. Or, to take another thing modern banking practices have stolen from us: "with usura / seeth no man Gonzaga his heirs and his concubines"(229). As crafty as such a sculpture may be, it also participates in the traffic of women's bodies, thus alluding to a problematic relationship with women. In the sculpture of Gonzaga, women are safely contained within a subservient (and literally commodified) role, thus opposing the crises in Pound's later work where "the female is chaos"(Gender of Modernism 353). Implicitly, therefore, Pound's ideal aesthetic situation involves a complicit relationship between artist and culture at large. That this

situation did not exist (from Pound's perspective) at the
time of this Canto's writing does not prevent Pound's
complicity with certain properties of his culture. In fact,
Pound's artistic ideals may actually encourage such
complicity. One might recall (from Chapter 1) Foucault's
theory of the episteme which suggests that everyone in a
particular culture will share certain basic assumptions.
Such sharing does not necessarily deny artistic
individuality, but instead asserts the necessity that
ideological forces influence any artist.

The discontinuity in Canto XLV both within itself and
with respect to the epic's wandering expanse may prove an
example of a text where "the relative coherence of
ideological categories is revealed. . . by the relative
incoherence of the text"(Eagleton 86). First, the artistic
examples Pound provides suggest an historical discontinuity
with the time period he addresses. If Pound really does
envision a culture where art readily circulates as valued
commodity, he might find it not in painting, sculpture, or
even poetry, but in film and other forms of mechanical
reproduction. Walter Benjamin talks about the age of the
machine in sweeping terms, suggesting that photography, for
instance, "changed the very nature of art"(683). In films
such as Modern Times, the machine age changes the very
nature of humanity as Charlie Chaplin, becoming part of the

machines he works with, uses his wrench on human body parts(Wollen 38). While reactions to mechanization ranged from adoration to horror, the notion of Fordist efficiency that accompanied the machine age irrevocably marked everyone to some degree, including Pound. If Pound often expresses himself by referring to historically distant cultures, such an act necessitates reading them not only for their own value, but as nostalgic representations of the present. These moments express an uncertain combination of modernist and postmodernist aesthetics, simultaneously (to use Jameson's terms in his discussions of nostalgia) an "enabling costume party of which Marx spoke" and "a collective unconscious in the process of trying to identify its own present. . . which seems to reduce itself to the recombination of various stereotypes of the past"(296). Consequently, I would argue that Pound's depictions of past cultures' idyllic commodification of art implicitly and unconsciously sympathize with film as an art form and mechanical reproduction as a way of life.

The machine age that permeates Pound's _Cantos_ partly accounts for the formal discontinuity between the poem's relatively large scope and its relatively minute fixation on artistic demarcation. For if the machine as an entity called for efficiency and minute exactitude, its status in burgeoning American capitalism required (especially in the

case of Hollywood) a globalization of markets. Terry Smith argues that in the case of Fordism these impulses need not be contradictory: "the shaping of space inside the factory was continuous with efforts to control the social spaces 'beyond' its thin, transparent walls. Fordist modernity spread fast, far, and wide"(40). Gustave Le Bon, admired by both Mussolini and Hitler, provided another manifestation of this dialectics when he prophesied the 20th Century would be defined by the control of crowds. These crowds could be monitored by new methods of fingerprinting, photography, and record keeping to keep track of "political radicals as well as criminals"(Charney and Schwartz 32). These elements of modernity were implicit in the management philosophy of Frederick Taylor, who offered writers the idea of composing in the same manner as a designer or engineer(Knapp 30). Ezra Pound, who was connected to almost all of the period's technology-influenced avant-gardes (Imagism, Futurism, and Vorticism), cited demolitions expert Hudson Maxim's work The Science of Poetry (1910) as a major influence in modernizing his style. Yet, scientific management's influence was so great that neither Pound's formal experiments nor his opposition to certain aspects of the world economy could prevent him from enacting some of the worst political manifestations adhering to control in the machine age. In fact, even when he seems far afield of machines and

modernity, he embodies the paradox Susan Hegeman points out
concerning not only cosmopolitan Pound's Midwestern roots,
but the fact that movements such as Futurism should start in
relatively underdeveloped Italy(21-22). But provincial
America was not quite so removed from avant-garde culture as
all that: "For Le Corbusier, to take but one well-known
example, modern architecture began with the North American
grain elevator"(Hegeman 21). Hegeman further suggests that
for many so-called cosmopolitan art movements, America's
combination of urban, rural, industrial, and popular
cultures was a key inspiration, as if Modernism were not so
much about the rise of new phenomena as about the encounters
of the old and the new.

In Canto XLV, Pound embodies this dialectic by
contrasting the artificial nature of Usura with an image
that combines both nostalgia for the past and a desire for
machinic order: "a house of good stone / each block cut
smooth and well fitting"(229). The prevalence of stone
sculptures in The Cantos inevitably makes them symbolic not
only of a coherent society, but a coherent poem as well.
These images, like the Tempio in the early Cantos, represent
a desire to demolish opposition "because nothing is so
irrefutable as a stone"(Kenner 325). Architecture, in fact,
provides another example of an art form that can be
extremely complex (like Hollywood and poetry) but also

extremely rigid and ordered.[8] There may be many walls and
hallways, but structure alone does not determine who has
access to various parts of the building. Architecture is
thus further complicated by the role of space in capitalist
economies, where much of its social complexity arises from
the contradictions between conceived or planned space,
perceived space, and lived space(Lefebvre 298). Because of
its marked visibility, for instance, architecture may appear
public or even populist even as its planning, production,
and use are conducted with numerous restrictions on the
populace. Interestingly enough, Pound's views on
architecture create a blueprint not only for other areas of
his work, but for a more general naivete (architecture being
one symptom) characteristic of the historical avant-garde:
"Buildings are simply there--evident for all to see, worked
and lived in. . . . The American people, given models of
excellence, would not long tolerate inferior work"(Tuma 86).
This faith in architecture elides the recalcitrance of
social structures in a manner similar to Pound's backing of
the patronage system to combat a commodity culture: "the
economic fact is that the capital of the patron [and his
chosen artists] depends upon that very economic system, and

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[8]See Robert Ray's discussions of the relationships between
Hollywood and architecture in his "Film and Literature"
essay in How a Film Theory Got Lost.

upon the exploitation of those who create its wealth"(Wolfe

41). In each case, Pound relies on aesthetics to such an

extent that he seems blind to the times when he has not

fulfilled Susan Suleiman's "hallmark" of the avant-garde, a

change in both symbolic and political practices(xv).

But even if in our most postmodern moods we acknowledge

a fundamentally specular relationship between aesthetics and

praxis, Pound's work presents problems. For as massive and

polyglot as his text may be, Pound's ideal stones are not

instantaneously placed, randomly constructed, or always on

the verge of crumbling.[9] The poem's contents tend not to

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[9]The architecture of the avant garde or of political
opposition has tended in at least three directions:

1. Instantaneous placement: "It is therefore not necessary
for the [Commune's barricades] to be perfectly constructed;
they can very well be made of overturned carriages, doors
torn off their hinges, furniture thrown out of windows,
cobblestones where these are available, beams, barrels,
etc." (qtd. in Kristen Ross 36).

2. Random construction, as in André Breton's poem "Cheval
the Mailman" which "pays homage to Joseph Ferdinand Cheval
(1836-1924), a mailman who collected stones and shells along
his route and used them to build his 'Ideal Palace' in his
hometown of Hauterives in France. The Palace is an ornate
temple adorned with sculptures of animals and monsters, a
true masterpiece of 'naive art'"(Zavatsky and Rogow 197).

3. Ready to topple, as in Denise Levertov's description of
altars built in the streets of Saigon and Hue, June 17th,
1966:

Children begin at green dawn nimbly to build
topheavy altars, overweighted with prayers,
thronged each instant more densely

gesture for refutation, but "stand more like artifacts" (Perloff 198). Gathering control over more terrain, these images of stone are closely aligned with all of Pound's natural images in an attempt to demonstrate "the mind working in accordance with natural [i.e., clear and irrefutable] processes"(Nicholls 72). While Kenner argues that the removal of the unified speaker in the Cantos' early drafts (Ur Cantos) represents a disavowal of control(360), it may be illuminating to ask if his specter remains. For throughout The Cantos these solid, natural images also form bulwarks against the real problem with usura: "the line grows thick / with usura is no clear demarcation"(229). In this last statement, Pound's argument against the economic practice of usura is an aesthetic one, asserting that thin, clear lines are inherently superior to other marks.

The concept of clear demarcation, in fact, seems to express itself throughout Pound's work right down to individual words. Referring to Pound's habit of double-spacing individual words in his poems, Kenner notes that "the moral virtue Blake the engraver attributed to outlines Pound the poet associated with bounded sounds, and preferably bounded terms"(91). Unfortunately, these words

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with almost-visible ancestors.
Where tanks have cracked the roadway
the frail altars shake. (237)

always point towards sticks and stones, an architecture
where the primary moral act involves "sorting things into
organic categories"(Kenner 453). This sort of rational
categorization, rather than representing an alternative to
mechanization, provides an example of what Giedion calls the
machine's total "intervention into the substance of organic
as well as of inorganic nature"(44). At worst, Pound's
desire to categorize can become a politics of separation in
which Pound insists on a continuity between the practice of
usury and an alleged linguistic imprecision on the part of
the Jews(Morrison 28). Paul Morrison argues, however, that
Pound's accusations actually respond to the economy's
inevitable change to a closed semiotic system(51), a change
as connected with Saussurian linguistics as its recognition
is historically contiguous with Saussure. Pound thus
insisted on a social ideal that was neither consistent with
contemporary linguistics nor economics. Instead, Pound's
will for clear demarcation represents a strange mixture of
mechanized aesthetics and isolationism, leading one to
lament that after his time in the Pisan cage and at St.
Elizabeth's hospital, he chose to retire in the isolated
monumentality of an Italian tower of stone. One could view
it as Pound's version of Yeats' stone retreat named Thoor
Ballylee. Even more than Yeats, however, Pound tragically

attempted to sway the masses from the vantage point of what James Logenbach calls "a secret society of one"(267).

Pound's contrast of sharp lines and the concept of usury presents a revealing affinity between isolation and engagement. For if, as Eagleton insists, texts produce ideology rather than express it, Pound's work may most closely align with dominant economic practices when he has left economics as a topic. Consequently, Pound's images of stone, clear outline, and the irrefutable quality of Nature are implicated with the precision of the machine age he inhabits. Or in the historically distant Chinese Cantos, demarcation coincides with Pound's famous artistic dictum, "Make It New":

> Tching prayed on the mountain and
>   wrote MAKE IT NEW
> on his bath tub
>   Day by day make it new
> cut underbrush
> pile the logs
> keep it growing.(264-5)

Despite Tching's isolation on the mountain, Pound's connection of this dictum to images of cleanliness (bathing), organizing (the logs), and cutting away associates newness not with a disruption of convention, but with the ordered, industrial processes fetishized by Loos,[10]

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[10]In a collection of essays entitled <u>Design By Choice</u>, ed. Penney Sparke, 1981, Reyner Banham in fact cites Adolf Loos' depiction of the plumber as "quartermaster of American culture."

Ford, and the Bauhaus. The efficiency of scientific management allows capital to circulate, to "keep it growing." Tching's actions in fact remind one of a teller stacking dollar bills at a bank. Yet this particular representation of Tching and his tub is also fascinating in light of the historical bathing differences between the East and West. Making a distinction between the East's history of bathing as focused toward "total regeneration" both physical and spiritual and the West's more industrial view of the bath as "mere ablution to be performed in swiftest routine"(628), Siegfried Giedion charts the increasing mechanization of the bathroom in the early 20th century. Consequently, one may be suspicious of Pound's depiction here, as it presents a bathing experience whose philosophical overtones embody a mystified image of industry.

But in these Chinese Cantos of empire, one also sees the will to totality, to "keep it growing" that accompanied factory reason: "The surface is not enough, / From Chang Ti nothing is hidden"(264). This latter image not only presents the idea of total coverage and depth, but of differentiation, that counterpart to scientific management necessary to enter all markets. Chang Ti's domination of surface and depth resonates in many directions when placed in Pound's historical context: above ground and underground

(geopolitics); conscious and unconscious(psychology);
literal and figurative (rhetoric); base and superstructure
(economic)-- to name a few. These Cantos may therefore
address Chinese dynasties, but they also align with the
general ideologies of the modernist era. To some extent,
the poem is itself imperial in its assimilation of Chinese
culture into European myth. Fundamentally speaking, then,
the Chinese Cantos are inadequately named. Canto LII which
opens this section, for instance, deliberately juxtaposes
European with Chinese history. The two-line passage when
"Riccio on his horse rides still to Montepulciano / [and]
the groggy church is gone toothless"(258) suggests Europe's
fall from a heroic set of ideals into corruption. This fall
marks a seasonal, even astrological passage to the Chinese
world. Most notably, the sun moves "into Gemini" and then
"enters Hydra"(258-9), states that respectively represent
splitting unity into two and then nine sections. But, as
Hydra's heads can grow back indefinitely, it evokes a more
uncontrollable diversity characteristic of culture in its
mass political form. Thus, even as Pound urges us to read
Italian and Chinese histories together, we are presented
with the necessity of reading these two systems in relation
to 20th-century preoccupations. And inasmuch as Pound
consciously resists contemporary ideology, the
Chinese/Italian displacement facilitates the enactment of

Pound's unconscious affinities with modern political economies.

But it is Pound's (and characteristically Modernism's?) response to this new political situation that is most fascinating. When the hydra presents itself as a disunified unity in need of theorization, the "fish ward now goes against crocodiles / To take all great lizards, turtles, for divination, / sea terrapin"(259). The use of turtles for divination purposes refers to the ancient practice of heating up turtle plastrons in order to produce a series of random cracks in them that court priests then "interpreted" in relation to the questions the kings had proposed(Jochim 27). According to Jochim, the questions asked range throughout all spheres of life. Reading this image in conjunction with the Cantos, one can surmise Pound's interest in such a practice. Despite our contemporary disdain of the credulous nature of divination, for the emperors (and for Pound) it represents the attempt to create a system adequate to describing the complexities of life. The relatively sudden change from a smooth surface to a crack-filled plane suggests a complexity analogous the form of the Cantos themselves. Are they not a series of cracks and lines designed to divine not only the past, but the future of the tribe? Only by simulating history's breadth and differentiation can Pound arrive at the simple truths

and clear lines of his social ideals. This formal
conviction holds the Utopian element of the Cantos, while
the "crocodiles" involved in the process represent the
necessary development of enemies and hate built into the
very structure of Pound's epic. This particular moment
forcefully suggests why one can never ultimately redeem this
poem from fascism by citing its complexity.

But the fragmentation of Pound's textual plastron is
disturbing on yet one more level. Namely, its broken form
represents not only the structure of the Cantos, but the
"pulverized [spatial] reality"(Lefebvre 317) of state
capitalism. Capitalist states pulverize space by zoning it
off into private, contradictory spaces organized for
continuance of the ruling economic strategies. Ironically,
then, the formal discontinuity of the Cantos may fall into
sympathy with capitalist structures precisely in its
ingenious attempt to create a tale adequate to the tribe.
This is not to suggest that every fragmented form is
capitalist in nature or even to deny Perloff the possibility
of a truly open form. In his theorization of capitalist
space, however, Henri Lefebvre forcefully suggests how
fragmented spaces are not inherently free spaces. For if
fragmented reality "may on occasion overwhelm political
power," this tendency "accounts for the ever more severe
character of political authority"(321). In this sense,

"severe" can be interpreted as "extreme," thus presenting the fascist state and the society of the spectacle (to use Guy Debord's phrase) as two different yet not necessarily opposing culminations of the attempt to create and control a fragmented, commodified economic structure.

My views on Pound's witting and unwitting affinities with contemporary economics can be summed up by correlating them to the economic goals behind Hollywood's standardized use of multiple cameras to ensure filmic continuity. In Hollywood's case, the expenditure required to mobilize multiple cameras and cameramen was well worth the time it saved in production. With MGM's 77 film projects in development during July 1927(Schatz 46), the will to rapidly produce and distribute films is readily apparent. Thus, Hollywood wanted to cut down the time required to produce films of a certain quality while Pound wanted to extend his precise aesthetics into a more general moral and cultural survey. One finds in both activities a formal embodiment of modernist ideology in the same way that the precise, mechanical dances of the Tiller girls[11] become the truest

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[11]The Tiller girls were a British dance troupe that Kracauer mistakenly thought were American. Yet, that mistake does little to contradict the main lines of Kracauer's argument, for the Tiller girls were in many ways an embodiment of capitalism and mass culture as well as a forerunner of the 1930s Busby Berkeley musicals such as the aptly titled Gold Diggers (1935).

embodiment of capitalist production due to their unconscious nature. Precisely because the Tiller productions are not meant to comment directly on capitalism, they become a mass ornament whose structure "reflects that of the entire contemporary situation"(Kracauer 406). In all of these cases, the formal control of inward looking precision serves the interest of an outward desire for market coverage. As Kracauer phrases it, the mass ornament shows how "the capitalist production process is an end in itself. . . . that knows no limit"(406).

Consequently, the early and late work of Pound and Eliot does not necessarily suggest a progression so much as a dialectic. If Pound's quatrains in "Hugh Selwyn Mauberley" were designed as a cure for "the slushiness and swishiness of the post-Swinburnian line"(qtd. in Ellman 382), this linguistic "efficiency" all the more enables the sweeping scope and rapid transitions of The Cantos. The referential variety in Pound's work therefore may not align itself with a multicultural inclusiveness so much as with Terry Smith's assertion that "the diverse imagery of modernity [is] precisely the imagery of the corporate state"(416). If Pound's own version of the mass ornament may be far more subtle than a Berkeley musical (though Berkeley's films can be mesmerizing in their surreal versions of mechanization), the two types of productions

still share a spirit and form based on their similar economic investments. But such economic goals have political manifestations as well, eerily suggested by the Ford Service Department's "web of spies and private police"(Smith 54) that monitored individuals and fought larger Unionization movements. Terry Smith's account of Fordist modernity, in fact, while "denying a deterministic equation between entities such as the Machine Age and Modernism"(7), does operate by placing various levels of ideology in conjunction with one another, looking for (in the spirit of Kracauer and Foucault) similarities in structure. It is in this vein that I would suggest some disturbing connections between the apparently open aesthetics of the Cantos and fascist politics, one corroborated by Walter Benjamin's observation that "the innovations of camera and recording equipment make. . . . the star and the dictator [simultaneously] emerge victorious"(249).

Inasmuch as the shot-reverse-shot editing method followed the star's gaze (also called eyeline matches), it not only efficiently reduced choice and fixed a film's meaning, but also reinforced star identification patterns. The Cantos operate a star system of their own, with Confucius and John Adams trading glances. As Pound reveres them for their lack of "twisted thoughts"(Morrison 26),

however, they threaten to become sacred yet inert stones.
This simplicity, perhaps a nostalgia for a soon-to-fade
machinic causality, also drives Pound's admiration for
economist C.H. Douglas, who wanted to provide a single cure
for modern economies in the form of an authentic money
system based on "true" value rather than speculation(Nichols
22). Pound's desire for a rationalized continuity also
figures into his reverence for Mussolini, whose project he
viewed as a masculine, hierarchical cure to the feminine
morass of Western Culture(Gender of Modernism 356). For
Pound, Mussolini "offered an escape from the barbarism of a
people become a mob"(Craig 253), an organizing principle as
integral to modern capitalism as to fascism. Yet even as
the trajectories of fascism became apparent, Pound
symptomatically invoked Mussolini's drainage of Italian
swamps as evidence of his virtue(Logenbach 266). This star
system in Pound's ensemble piece, this drained swamp whose
complex root systems are known as the Cantos, designates
European Jews as a single enemy, a "dung flow from
1913"(Pound 634) in contrast to "the ghosts dipping in
crystal"(639) who accept a brilliant and well defined form.
The Cantos as a work attempt to designate and control the
disordered elements of culture to the point where
crystalizing spirits into writing sounds much like E.J.
Marey's recording apparatus "whose needles register the

movement [of steam] on smoked cylinders"(Giedion 20). If
for no other reason, Pound's reifying misinterpretation of
efficiency requires that one look for the stars that anchor
his goal of controlling the crowd in an apparent attempt to
escape it.

But perhaps one more filmic reference can help explain
why Pound's microscopic fetishization of control links so
explicitly to global desires. As a poem whose publishing
history spans fifty-two years starting in 1917, the Cantos
can historically speaking be regarded to embody both Fordist
and post-Fordist outlooks. Consequently, one is tempted to
read the poem with an eye for conflict and anachronism.
Pound increases this temptation with his own nostalgic
method of reference. One has every right to ask why Pound
makes certain historical references just as one may rightly
wonder why Jules Verne's Around the World in 80 Days (1872)
was remade as a film in 1956, the same year a Federal
Highway act was passed in the Senate. Watching the film, I
was struck by the paradox that Phileas Fogg, a man who had
his meals at the exact same minute of the day for years, was
suddenly able, on a bet with his fellows, to make it around
the 19th-century world in such a variety of unpredictable
vehicles and circumstances(the film advertises, "More means
of transportation were used than in any other film"). And
yet, in this film whose very title suggests globalism, one

may sense a dialectical relationship that David Harvey describes in Chapter 22 of The Condition of Postmodernity, where he explains that "Fordist modernity" and "flexible postmodernism" may actually form a

> matrix of internal relations, [where] there is never one fixed configuration, but a swaying back and forth between centralization and decentralization, between authority and deconstruction, between hierarchy and anarchy, between permanence and flexibility, between the detail and the social division of labor(to list but a few of the many oppositions that can be identified).(341-42)

In this compelling description of a capitalist matrix which comprehends both the precision of Fordism and the global specificities resulting from a logic of flexible accumulation, Harvey creates a starting point from which one may start to explain the contradictions in cultural productions as seemingly different as Around the World in 80 Days and Ezra Pounds Cantos.

For, in the logic of Jameson's discussion of "Nostalgia for the Present," one sees in the Verne adaptation a 1950s expression of the very American preparation for a global economy based upon a "mature" or "late" capitalism which is less a shift away from the old as the transformation of Fordist principles in the service of a more expansive, global system. And, if Pound's work were to be retitled Around the World in 109 Cantos, then we could say that his position on the matrix may hold somewhat more flexibility

with respect to Fordist efficiency, but we must talk about the complex relationships between the two terms before we can begin to understand Pound's work.

Zero Point of Cinematic Style: Yeats' Spectatorship

While associating Pound with multiple camera use helps elucidate his desire to cover and control his various "markets," Yeats tends to take a more passive approach best compared to Hollywood's "Zero Point of Cinematic Style." The "Zero Point" is actually the Institutional Mode of Representation, and can best be described as the attempt to disguise the artificiality of shot construction as a natural representation of reality. Paradoxically, countless takes have been brought together into the editing room in order to create a seamless illusion, a world without artifice (Burch 113). Such a method provides no entry point at which to begin questioning the product. In contrast to Brecht, who wanted to always remind the audience of the lights and scaffolding in his performances (141), Hollywood developed the IMR to establish an unquestionable convention of reality. To the extent that the "conventional" part of this representation is disguised, it comes to behave like the ubiquitous rhetoric of unassailable Nature which virtually everyone, including Hitler,[12] employed in the early 20th-

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[12]I refer to Hitler as a case reference not only because of the historical overlap between high modernism and the rise

century. In his attempt to mobilize contemporary faith in science, Hitler in Mein Kampf made the argument that the "life of nations, races, cultures and continents. . . is governed by the same laws of health and sickness as those governing the life of individuals"(Stern 40). Consequently, a nation or race that brutally dominates another is only following the laws of natural selection. But if history (or cinema) follows natural, unchangeable laws, there is nothing to do but sit back and watch, and this premise brings us to Yeats who once paraphrased Burke, "the State was a tree, no mechanism to be pulled in pieces and put up again"(Stanfield 42). In the following section, I will explore what the "Zero Point" reveals about Yeats' aesthetic practices and their political implications.

Beginning with a familiar poem by Yeats, such as "The Second Coming," one may then open up into a more general discussion of his historical views and how they offer few if any points of entry to political action. "The Second Coming," published in 1921, envisions an arriving moment of history that is deceptively chaotic: "Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold / Mere anarchy is loosed upon the

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of fascism, but because Nazi propaganda methodology hinges on control over the image and its distribution in culture. Finally, Nazism could be regarded as one of the most effective and terrible avant-gardes ever to come about (inasmuch as an avant-garde tries to manipulate aesthetic production into new political realities).

world"(<u>Collected Poems</u> 187). The passive tense in this latter line paradoxically suggests that some entity pulls the strings of anarchy, but the verb also relinquishes responsibility for the events. Indeed, the speaker seems caught up in a production beyond his powers of analysis. He calls it first a "revelation," and then the "Second Coming." Using these two terms, one might further explore Yeats' passivity by introducing the rhetorics of religion to nature and the rhetorics of totality to cinema.

In addition to concept of Nature, Hitler also utilized the discourse of religion in his propaganda. Not only did religious values have a staying power after Nietzsche's philosophical rants, but they possessed the same unarguable quality as scientific truth. If one could prove something (by whatever means) to be natural or divinely ordained, there were few if any types of discourse that could be held against such conclusion. As Stern phrases it, Hitler "hides behind the metaphor of 'the prophet,' turning the fiction into an active political myth; his declaration of intent becomes an action programme"(65). But the problem of 'the prophet' as Yeats enacts the metaphor concerns the lack of action. Waiting for a vision, he behaves like a passive viewer: "a vast image of *Spiritus Mundi* / troubles my sight." Not only do we have the cinematic trappings of

image and sight, but the Latin word for "World Spirit"
confirms what André Bazin suggests of all cinematic systems,
the temptation of attaining total reality(20). Implicit in
Bazin's "myth of total cinema" is the need to inquire into
the politics of cinema, especially its totalitarian
impulses. This inquiry is made more difficult in Yeats'
case, given Adorno's warning against the twin evils of magic
and positivism, a Charybdis and Scylla that Robert Ray finds
animating Classic Hollywood. For Hollywood, as for Yeats,
the positivism, or rationalized productive apparatus, occurs
behind the scenes while the audience is enveloped in a cloud
of enchantment. As previously noted, Yeats' attitude seems
the inverse of Pound's in The Cantos which fetishizes the
positivism of control. Yeats instead relinquishes political
control to magic, a spiritual revelation as unarguable as
Nature itself. Part of this acquiescence involves a belief
in the world's inherently evil nature, permanently
distancing Yeats from his socialist contemporaries(Stanfield
80). Yeats' Anti-Christ, both evil, magic, and natural,
takes on the very beastly form of a lion-man, marching
inexorably towards the end of a world-film until "darkness
drops again" in the theater. Yeats thus "plays upon the
poem's lack of finality to enforce our fearful apprehension
of the uncontrollable future"(Craig 110), leaving us

powerless as the "indignant desert birds" who flit around the behemoth, captive as an ideal blockbuster audience.

The question at hand thus involves increasing one's ability to intervene in political affairs. As things stand, "The Second Coming" complies with generalized passivity which takes the form of subservience to any number of ruling forces: "despotic rule of educated classes"(Craig 2); Maud Gonne of whom a young Yeats wrote that she could make people believe the earth was flat(Freyer 11); or perhaps most frighteningly, the discipline of fascism Yeats opposed to a "disintegrating world"(O'Brien 39). Though (as Elizabeth Cullingford says) it is dangerous to equate fascism with Nazism(62), the camera shutter separating the two has a variable aperture. So the goal of avoiding them both remains, and at least part of this goal requires increasing interpretive possibilities; for Bazin, one approaches the goal by moving from a montage aesthetic toward longer takes and a larger screen space by tracking the camera back from any preconceived subject(36). But what literary devices would simulate these filmic techniques, and for that matter what power relations does such camera movement simulate? If the montage of Eisenstein[13] behaves like an argument while Surrealist narrative operates like a revelation, what

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[13]Who once discussed another form of montage on a train with Ezra Pound, the Chinese ideogram.

hybrids or alternatives can provide new possibilities within the writing of Pound and Yeats? Or more specific to this section, what methods can be used to prevent "The Second Coming" from sounding like the title of Yeats' melancholy block buster?

Remembering that the term "blockbuster" originally referred to the largest conventional bombs used in WWII (capable of destroying an entire block), one might scan for the parts of Yeats' poetics and philosophy that are potentially destructive. To begin with, we may continue to examine processes introduced in "The Second Coming," in effect tracking backwards from our original object of focus. A "deep-focus" approach would connect "The Second Coming" not only to other poems by Yeats, but to historical processes and events that enact parallel rhetorical structures. "The Gyres" for instance, a poem published on the eve of WWII, describes historical structures in a way that not only justifies passivity but requires it:

> Irrational streams of blood are staining earth;
>
> Empedocles has thrown all things about;
> Hector is dead and there's a light in Troy;
> We that look on but laugh in tragic joy.(CP 293)

As in "The Second Coming," chaotic events are combined by the introduction of a spectator, in this case one who might do well as a play-by-play announcer. The lines here have the feel of voice-over in a film, a passive commentary on

the film's events. While such a response to the
contemporary events in Europe may be understandable, it also
proved to be costly. But Yeats' passivity is even more than
a reaction to violence; it accrues by viewing history as an
implacable entity or subjectivity rather than as an
assemblage of events which the individual and collective
subject can always supplement. The title of the poem in
fact refers to the patterns history takes on as Yeats
explains them in A Vision. While Yeats' system follows the
Hegelian model of thesis and antithesis, it adds even more
structure by suggesting that these antitheses occur as 2000
year cycles in the shape of gyres. As one system reaches
its height at the 1000 year mark, its antithesis is born.
Despite the complexity of thought represented in Yeats'
vision, it still presents the cliché of history as a thing
that moves outside of human agency: "Heave no sigh, let no
tear drop, / A greater, a more gracious time has gone"("The
Gyres" 293).

    Since he views history as a set of formal structures
where only the "paint would be freshened"(Kenner 362), Yeats
tends to look to art as a discourse of lasting meaning. In
the poem following "The Gyres," "Lapis Lazuli," a carving
becomes the answer to "hysterical women [who] say / They are
sick of palette and fiddle-bow"(Collected Poems 294). Yeats
may gaze on the carving, and the "Chinamen" in the carving

may sit on a hill and gaze upon their own "tragic scene."
Though Yeats adopts a condescending tone, certain puns in
the poem suggest a discomfort with his attempt to extricate
himself from history. The term "hysterical women," for
instance, seems a double transformation. The term "women"
functions as a misogynist condensation of the women and men
who would question an art that aestheticizes history into
eternity. Yeats further reduces opposition through the
obvious substitution of "hysterical" for "historical."
Through an attack on a straw woman, Yeats partially
disguises his rhetorical activities. I say "partially"
because the closer the poem's imagery veers toward European
conflict, the more Yeats betrays a sense of responsibility
for his aesthetic choices. The women warn him

> That if nothing drastic is done
> Aeroplane and Zeppelin will come out,
> Pitch like King Billy bomb-balls in
> Until the town lie beaten flat.

Though these lines ostensibly refer to Prince Wilhelm of
Germany, since Billy is a nickname of William (and the name
of the club policemen carry), this allusion combines with
the elisions in "hysterical women" to suggest Yeats'
complicity with the real violence that may accompany a
refusal of political engagement. Such transformations
embody the internal dissonances which, according to Pierre
Macheray, constitute the relation of a work to its

ideology(Eagleton 89). In Yeats' case, the contradiction
between the puns and the overt argument of his poem reveal
an uncomfortable affinity with the philosophers of Weimer
Germany: "by stamping political and prudential thinking as
inauthentic, and by denying to the institutionalizing of
group conflicts the dignity of serious thought, Jaspers--
like Heidegger and countless others--implicitly advocates an
attitude of political quietism and conformism"(Stern 89).
Similarly, by valorizing art and implicitly scoffing at
historical distress, Yeats quiets the clamors for change
into the "mournful melodies" the "Chinamen" play on the
hill. He does so, however, by wearing the cloak of a poet
over the violent acts of King Billy.

In fact, Yeats' retreats to art often retain a close
proximity to history. Yeats' poem entitled "Byzantium," for
instance, presents an aestheticized civilization (see
"Sailing to Byzantium") whose very virtues have a
problematic relation to 20th-century Europe. As in the
previous poems, the speaker encourages a passive
acquiescence to larger forces. Instead of taking the form
of a viewing, however, this poem presents a sort of
zombification: "And all complexities of fury leave, / Dying
into a dance / An agony of trance"(CP 248). Since
"complexities" refers to "human blood and mire," the
resemblance between these ceremonies and those of Nuremberg

rings as loudly as the date of the poem's publication
(1933). For just as these bodies fall into an organized,
mindless ritual of intoxication, the late night, emotional
rallies at Nuremberg were designed solely in order "to work
up support for decisions already taken and often already
announced"(Stern 73). Indeed, Yeats suggests that these
rituals are beyond interpretation, mere events without
discernible causes: "At midnight on the Emperor's pavement
flit / Flames that no faggot feeds nor steel has lit / Nor
storm disturbs, flames begotten of flame." It is just as
impossible to disturb or even understand such flames as it
is for Josef K. in The Trial to understand the workings of a
government that vaguely asserts he "is guilty because of
what he is [and what is that?] rather than because of
anything he has done"(Stern 114). While this poem may refer
to ancient history, then, its form more closely simulates
the fascist values of Yeats' own time period. Fredric
Jameson's conception of nostalgia seems as operative here as
it was with Pound.

In addition to presenting another "zero point" beyond
analysis, the poem is haunted by film when the speaker
confronts a floating "image, man or shade / Shade more than
man, more image than shade." The interchangeability of
terms reminds us of human subjectivity and its relation to
the image. Here "man" has practically been gobbled up by

the image, a phenomenon forcing one to wonder how the film reel and its analogues behave like "Hades' bobbin," unleashing a celluloid cloth of horrors that returns in the winding cloth of mummies. To not ask such a question implicitly allows the image and the shade to consume man and create what Yeats calls "superhuman," or what Nietzsche might call subhuman, that passive quality which espouses "death-in-life and life-in-death." At the height of Yeats' Byzantium, these values gave birth to the Anti-Christ.

To turn eyes away from the hereafter to immanent social realities, Nietzsche wrote about a different sort of Anti-Christ, one that might be more interested in the specific historical situations that guide Yeats' choice of aestheticized order over historical malleability. Elizabeth Cullingford, for instance, explains Yeats' fascist leanings in the multiple terms of Ireland's genuine need for political order, the strength of Italian propaganda (especially the political actions of Italian poet Gabriele D'Annunzio), and disillusionment with Leninist and Stalinist versions of Marxism(64-9). These explanations, like Yeats' poems, combine political and aesthetic qualities. They also align Yeats' specific politics with a larger modernist rage for order. Although it may be hard to pinpoint just where such a desire comes from, the analogous conic structures of Yeats' historical gyres and the vortices of Wyndham Lewis

and Ezra Pound beg an analysis that goes beyond the fact
that Pound was Yeats' secretary for a time. In their
tightly structured, almost machinic form, they correspond to
an even more general modern rage for control. Just as
modernism produced its dystopian visions such as <u>Metropolis</u>
and <u>Brave New World</u>, however, Pound's vortex funneled
histories into prejudices while Byzantium at the height of
the gyre of love (0-2000 AD) initiated the birth of the
"rough beast" described in "The Second Coming." If one were
to posit this beast as the rise of fascism, one would do
well to ask how modernism did not cause this rise, but made
it possible. How did modernism's fetishization of
efficiency make possible such related phenomena as an Irish
poet's fascist sympathies and related fascination with
eugenics, the sterilization laws passed in thirty U.S.
states by 1931, and Nazi Germany's machineries of
extermination? Furthermore, why do Yeats' initial drafts of
"The Second Coming" bear specific references to the Russian
Revolution and WWI(Logenbach 131), only to be rubbed out in
favor of an ambiguous, filmic nightmare? Assuming that such
events are fortuitously analogous could have disastrous
effects. Of course, as Stuart Hall notes, a "Marxi[st
critique] without final guarantees" has to also "acknowledge
the real indeterminacy of the political" when used to
tentatively theorize the connections between various social

practices. Still, one must look everywhere, even in the apparent innocence of poetic expression, for the ideological structures that can at times lead to such violence.

How Eliot Froze the Dialectics of Chance and Control

Ultimately, Noël Burch does not advocate total control during the process of film making or complete abandonment to chance, but instead calls for an underlying dialectic between the two. This dialectic is instrumental in what Burch views as a more poetic approach to film making. Ironically enough, I would like to examine this poetic approach to film making in relation to the poetry of T.S. Eliot. More specifically, I will examine moments where (even if his poetry is arguably complex and multifaceted) Eliot crosses the line of the dialectic in favor of control. Despite the ambiguity and dialogism of The Waste Land, Eliot's desire for control over the material is to some extent complicit not only with the modernizations already discussed, but also with conservative or even fascist politics. The point I would like to make is not that Eliot makes either a conscious or unconscious choice for such politics, but that Eliot is susceptible to the desire expressed by the highly educated and multilingual Mussolini:

> When the masses are like wax in my hands, when I
> stir their faith, or when I mingle with them and
> am almost crushed by them, I feel myself to be a
> part of them. . . Does not the sculptor sometimes

> smash his block of marble into fragments, because
> he cannot shape it into the vision he has
> conceived? (qtd. in Stern 34)

This statement, with its range of attitudes toward its
subject(s), may help one understand Eliot's poetics on many
levels. It merges the positions of director, spectator, and
image in ways that allude to the frightening contexts of the
mass ornament. By exploring the relationship between
Eliot's poetry and the dialectics suggested by Mussolini's
statement, however, I primarily wish to suggest how even the
greatest minds, especially in the modernist political
context, are susceptible to the desire for control. In J.P.
Stern's analysis of relatively apolitical Jaspers, Freud,
Jung, and Heidegger (all "cutting edge" thinkers), he notes
that "freedom was not one of the values they were worried
about"(88).

Thus, there is no fundamental reason why Eliot's most
"experimental" poetics may not harbor conservative purposes.
In fact, Eliot's case confirms the fact that any ideological
practice can have an avant-garde(Lovell 52). In his chapter
on "Monopoly and Modernism," for instance, Terry Smith
argues that the Ford Company fetishized "industrial design,
the Moderne as subcultural fashion, and avant-garde art" in
its unsuccessful attempt to "command the field" with the
Model A(127-8). This sort of appropriation therefore
involves not an innocent eclecticism, but instead a

monopolistic desire to control previously unused markets.
If Ford created a persona that despised "Wall Street
profiteers and monopolists"(98), this persona served to
distance his own monopolistic practices from the anti-
Semitic aversions to monopoly he publicly maintained.
Ford's choices became naturalized under the rubric of
inevitable progress, and he thus effectively excused his
choice as necessity(135). If Ford can use avant-gardism for
monopolistic purposes, it is feasible that Eliot in The
Waste Land may also appropriate avant-garde techniques in
order to gain greater "control" over the materials and
culture with which he deals. In fact, Ezra Pound (whose
poetic attempts at coverage have been discussed) has been
credited with helping to break up the more narrative poem
into the fragmented, modernist piece we know today. Just as
Ford diverted attention from his own monopoly, or as
Hollywood claimed its controlling standards conformed to the
needs of mass production(Horkheimer 121), Eliot's own
conservatism may not only have been masked by the avant-
garde appearances of The Waste Land, but furthered by them.
While Eagleton argues that the form of Eliot's poem stands
in conflict with its recourse to myth(148), the form may in
fact give such conservatism an entry into otherwise hostile
artistic circles. That possibility does not mean, however,

that Eliot was always comfortable with the fragmentation he courted.

There are moments in <u>The Waste Land</u>, then, that evince the duality between control and fragmentation in Mussolini's artistic metaphor. Not only does the metaphor remind us that art and politics are never very far apart, but it associates fragmentation with frustration over a loss of control. In Mussolini's comparison, fragments occur after the artist has failed to achieve a unified whole, not due to a desire to achieve artistic ingenuity. Thus, it is imperative to rid oneself of the automatic association between artistic fragmentation and progressive, avant-garde ideology. In fact, some of the most subversive artistic acts of the modernist period often involved a reintegration of fragments into new contexts. Marcel Duchamp's ready-mades come to mind, for example. His upside down urinal had no inherent status, but achieved its subversive meaning via its entrance into an art exhibit that purported to accept any artwork submitted with the proper fee. Or, returning to Burch's terminology, everything depends on the dialectic between artistic control and other elements more destructive to unity.

A famous line near the end of <u>The Waste Land</u> articulates these tensions concerning fragmentation: "These fragments I have shored against my ruins"(CP 69). Aside

from the many things to which this line may refer, it is important to note how the speaker associates the more neutral term "fragments" with the far more connotatively rich "ruins." While "fragments" may refer to many things including language, the term "ruins" can not be dissociated from the idea of the physical decay or destruction of culture. This idea is reinforced by preceding lines in the same stanza: "Shall I at least set my lands in order? / London bridge is falling down falling down falling down" (CP 69). Thus, the "conclusion" of the poem, so to speak, reveals that its subject is not merely language or poetics, but social control. Shall we read Eliot's dialogism to its logical conclusion, however, and associate the desire for such forced unity with the childishness of a nursery rhyme? Karl Jaspers did not hesitate to surmise as much when he defended Heidegger as "a 'child' that got caught by the juggernaut of hideous political events" (Stern 93), but as Stern notes, such conclusions inexcusably insult and exonerate the thinkers they refer to while also underestimating the complex structures that the most egregious ideologies can exhibit.

Indeed, the first section of the poem reveals Eliot's own complex poetic choices. Entitled "The Burial of the Dead," it thematically suggests that nothing can ever really be put to rest:

> April is the cruellest month, breeding
> Lilacs out of the dead land, mixing
>
> Memory and desire, stirring
> Dull roots with spring rain. (CP 53)

While this section may affirm an eternal restlessness, it
does not really view this state in terms of unlimited
possibilities. Instead, it is a cruel state of affairs that
prevents the numbness of eternal rest. In fact, Eliot's own
poetics in this section attempt to still these unexpected
resurrections. While the subject matter may involve random
constellations of lilacs, Eliot's self-avowed method of
composition is more like a well-tended garden. When Eliot
presents the character of Madame Sosostris, he is careful
not to let her or the "wicked pack of cards" exert any
control over the poem. In a note to this section, Eliot
claims, "I am not familiar with the exact constitution of
the Tarot pack of cards, from which I have obviously
departed to suit my own convenience"(CP 70). Consequently,
as the fabricated images on the cards reappear in the poem,
one begins to understand how the tarot section functions
much like an overture in opera, summarizing the motifs to
come. Instead of the many possible combinations that might
occur if a real tarot deck were to be shuffled and dealt,
Eliot's system resembles the closed movie sets that
Hollywood began to favor precisely because they reduced the
contingencies that might enter into the process of

production. If one analyzes the poem's means of production rather than its subject matter, then Eliot's use of tarot cards is extremely revealing. The cards appear in <u>The Waste Land</u> precisely because they symbolize either utter randomness or the speaker's subjection to fate, and that is exactly why Eliot must subdue their power by arranging them beforehand. This closure even infiltrates Eliot's choices of figurative language, as John Cooper notes in <u>T.S. Eliot and the Politics of Voice</u>, since <u>The Waste Land</u> is dominated by metonymic "accusations" that tend to close off debate (87).

In fact, the next section of <u>The Waste Land</u> has moved to a game with a lesser element of chance than cards. Its title, *A Game of Chess*, refers to a play in which a young girl is seduced while her mother-in-law plays chess in the next room. While the mirroring between the game and the seduction does allude to the logic of the tarot deck, one also finds the romance and calculation suggested by Adorno's derogatory "crossroads of magic and positivism" phrase that, as previously noted, can describe Hollywood's practices. This section of the poem actually contains many characteristic oppositions. First, there is the rich and closed room, almost stifling in its mise en scène:

> Doubled the flames of sevenbranched candelabra
> Reflecting light upon the table as

> The glitter of her jewels rose to meet it,
> From satin cases poured in rich profusion.(CP 56)

As satirical as this view of wealth may be, when the room is
"stirred by the air / That freshened from the window," a
string of horrors follows. The next window image comes
unexpectedly in reference to a picture opening on to "The
change of Philomel, by the barbarous king so rudely forced
[raped]." It seems almost as if openness itself is the
enemy, a paralyzing one: "The wind under the door. / 'What
is that noise now? What is the wind doing?' / Nothing again
nothing"(CP 57). This depiction of a woman whose "nerves
are bad," who fears what may be going on just outside the
door, suggests a departure to Eliot's biography, or what
Walter Benjamin refers to as the star's "aura." Speaking of
the giftedness, emotional derangement, and ether-sniffing of
Eliot's wife Vivien in connection with Eliot's own poetry,
Hugh Kenner asks, "Yet has anyone, unaware of private facts,
ever suspected how many lines of *Ash-Wednesday* simply meant
what they said?"(277). The autobiographical aspect of
Eliot's writing is only one of many luminous details that
suggest how contingent events may have further swayed Eliot
towards an association of openness with chaos. Perhaps the
ultimate response to the open room of <u>The Waste Land</u> was
<u>Four Quartets</u>, a poem modeled on the control implicit in the

musical Quartet, a form almost always performed in a closed room for a small audience(Cooper 163).

Most of the High Modernists, of course, also battled economic forces beyond their control. As Kenner notes, Eliot worked at a bank until he was at times too exhausted to write, Gaudier begged fragments of marble from the refuse of construction sites, and Pound wasted massive amounts of poetic energy as a free-lance writer. Hence, we have a counterpart to the wealth in *A Game of Chess*, an earthy bar conversation about false teeth, abortion, and gammon. Instead of a genteel and unengaged game of chess, the passage speaks of a "real" soldier who has just been discharged. This section leads into *The Fire Sermon*, Buddha's lecture on the need to relinquish desire for earthly possessions. Opposing the cinematic brilliance of *A Game of Chess*, the setting here bears the desolation of a circus having just left town: "The river's tent is broken; the last fingers of leaf / Clutch and sink into the wet bank. The wind / Crosses the brown land, unheard. The nymphs are departed"(CP 60). Again, we have an opening in a shelter ("river's tent") associated with extreme trauma-- poverty, emptiness, and the rat race: "A rat crept softly through the vegetation / Dragging its slimy belly on the bank"(CP 60). Following the pun on "bank" to the previous

section's mention of "rats' alley / where the dead men lost their bones," one wonders whether this poem may be a death wish for the loss of chance("bones" or dice). For at a certain point in the life of Eliot and the other Modernists, it seemed as if every spin of the roulette wheel involved a greater loss. And yet, to eliminate chance, both aesthetically and economically, was ultimately to relinquish a change of possibilities.

In this sort of game, the space of fear known as the open room becomes associated not with chaos but with drought, ultimately no different (offering no change of possibilities) from the closed room: "Here is no water but only rock / Rock and no water and the sandy road"(CP 66). In this poem where tents and cities are made of fog, where vast deserts are literally watertight, where the open/closed dichotomy has been so thoroughly disrupted, Eliot invariably chooses closure. Even the unexpected thunder that enters the desert of the last section, the only thing that could literally rip a hole in the environment, is made to sound like a sermon telling listeners to "Give, sympathize, control"(CP 75). While the poem seems to give much sympathy, one also wonders how much control enters into the social chaos the poem depicts. The question's importance stems from another question at the end of the poem, "Shall I at least set my lands in order," which alludes to both the

logical and penal meanings of order. This line reminds one
of another great literary landscape of open/closed spaces,
Franz Kafka's "Before the Law" from The Trial. In the
parable, a man comes to a gate located in the middle of
nowhere asking to be admitted to "The Law" and is told by
the guard that he must sit outside and wait to be let in.
After a lifetime of waiting, the "guardian" (who has only
kept the man out by means of rhetoric) tells the protagonist
the gate was for him only and now will be shut. As in many
of Kafka's stories, one toys with the idea of self-imposed
imprisonment, or as Eliot phrases it, "We think of the key,
each in his prison / Thinking of the key, each confirms a
prison"(CP 69). Using Kenner's dictum, wondering if these
lines mean exactly what they say, how do these lines relate
to the rhetoric of The Waste Land and to Eliot's own
poetics? What labyrinthine and fragmented prisons do they
espouse or create; what Law do they await? In discussing
"the age of Kafka and Hitler," J. P. Stern speaks of a
common "insinuation that the exterminator is not wholly in
the wrong, that there *is* a foothold for his authority in the
victim's soul, as though his hold over the victim were more
than a matter of superior might"(137). But this age is also
Eliot's age, and since this parable from The Trial occurs
"In the Cathedral," it is not unfair to ask to what extent

Eliot's later religious conservatism was prefigured in his earlier work and to what extent it relates to the law and politics of the age: what kind of murder awaits in Becket's (Eliot's) cathedral, and what things have come together in the form of its author.

In their attempts to understand the barbarisms that modernity produced, Horkheimer and Adorno argue that the culture industry's (or on a slightly smaller scale Hollywood's) tendency toward control and repetition stems from an insatiable will to attain economic totality(136). While I do not claim to equate Eliot's most famous poem with the culture industry these authors describe, Eliot did work as a banker while composing it. "Frustrated by fiscal practices at first hand"(Cooper 64) and yet complicit with them, Eliot was inevitably influenced by the dominant material ideologies of the time. I would like to argue, finally, that the general ideology (to use Eagleton's term) driving the modern automobile and film industries, and perhaps the industry of fascism, also influenced Eliot's poetic enterprise. His uncertain mental and economic status may have contributed, among other things, to the poem's fragmented form, but the poem's various resistances to openness also participate in a more general control revolution that produced many casualties. Film merely

brought me to these moments in <u>The Waste Land</u> that
reverberate in a panorama no poet completely escapes.

Conclusion

Perhaps because film was so rapidly integrated into the
machineries of mass production, film criticism expresses
nuances relating aesthetics and politics that literary
critics would do well to consider. As André Bazin's work
reminds us, aesthetic techniques may either establish a
large element of control or a significant openness to
chance(Ray 71). Consequently, the fragmented appearance of
montage (that has been carefully pieced together) may not
result in as many interpretive possibilities as merely
craning the camera back into deep focus, thus allowing the
viewer to choose what he will see(Bazin 36). While such
divisions in technique are never hard and fast (nor is any
metaphor between two art forms), one is left to wonder what
Eliot and his readers are missing when Prufrock zooms in to
the oftseen woman's arms: "And I have known the arms
already, known them all / Arms that are braceleted and white
and bare / (But in the lamplight, downed with light brown
hair!)"(CP 5). Is there resonance of a New York Jewish
accent in that first line, discontented with the inane
observations provided by this close-up? Let us track
backwards to discover Nöel Burch's assertion that the

"adhesion of the star system [is] the counterpart of [the] close-ups in the constitution of the filmic persona"(*October* 79), then a little bit farther to find the constitution of Hitler's persona in Leni Reifenstal's orchestrated documentaries of Nuremberg. Sometimes we might track backwards to find more of the same or nothing, but these changes in focus are all about refocusing the viewer's attention, whatever there is to see.

In the following chapters, I hope to change focus by using games (see Appendix) that involve the element of chance, such as the I-Ching and tarot cards, to direct my discussion to unexpected terrain in the poems of Pound, Eliot, and Yeats respectively. In somewhat unexpected ways, then, these games/practices relate to the larger history of automatism, which took both mechanical and Occult forms in the late 19th and early 20th century. As systems that allow input, to use Beniger's terms, the more progressive strains of automatism suggest powerful methods for increasing the range of answers to critical inquiries. Thus, the individual chapters on Pound, Eliot, and Yeats will begin with general questions about these poets' relationships to politics and history, but will refrain from the sorts of assumptions that guide this first articulation of the problem. As for the games themselves, their mystical properties will be made "public and profane," thus holding

to Walter Benjamin's interested but skeptical attitude towards "surrealist moments of 'illumination'"(Wollen 49). The final chapter will once again move to the larger issues of experimentation and politics, suggesting how any experimental critique can be viewed as a form of role-playing designed to expand one's social and political identities. Through the metaphor of the séance, it will explore the idea of role-playing in novels by André Breton and Julian Barnes, interrogating the gap between political thought and political action. My ultimate goal will be to theorize the expansions desired by the historical avant-garde, the final goal of their aesthetic experiments—to escape one's static tendencies and enact lived political change.

CHAPTER 4
TWO CAGES: SECOND THOUGHTS AT PISA

Introduction

Whenever the question of Pound's anti-Semitism comes up in conversation, someone inevitably asks, "How could someone with the name Ezra be anti-Semitic?" It may be a stupid question, but it does lead to some interesting ironies, especially with respect to Pound's imprisonment at Pisa. The Biblical book bearing Pound's first name "records the fulfillment of God's promise to restore Israel to her land after the seventy years of captivity in Babylon" (Ryrie 624). Pound was around sixty years of age when imprisoned, yet for his delivery to approach the symbolic value of escaping Babylon, one must envision something other than his release from Pisa. Pound's version of Babylon would be his fascism, his anti-Semitism, and escaping that city of sin would require a prophet on the order of the Biblical Ezra.

Interestingly, _Ezra_ had a compositional strategy similar to the _Cantos_. Charles Ryrie notes that even though "Ezra is not mentioned in the book as its author, he most likely did write the book using various documents, genealogies, and personal memoirs as his sources" (624). The

notion of authorship is called into question by the status
of each Ezra as a bricoleur, thus proving how modernism
merely foregrounded elements that have always constituted
the scene of writing. Analyzing the poem <u>Eugene Onegin</u>
(124) as a paradigmatic case of literary dialogism, Mikhail
Bakhtin states that "there is scarcely a word that appears
as Pushkin's direct word"(131). Instead, heteroglossic
works such as <u>Eugene Onegin</u> and the <u>Cantos</u>[1] present the
images of various languages and levels of discourse that
inevitably fall under invisible quotation marks as they
implicitly critique one another. Bakhtin's theories, as
well as those of Foucault and Barthes, present the
possibility of analyzing works of literature not only as
irredeemably divided from their authors, but as fractured
within themselves. Rather than depoliticizing a work such
as the <u>Cantos</u>, this method makes it possible to trace the
conflicting ideological pathways within the work to their
logical (though not undebatable) conclusions/origins outside
the work, wherever they may be. After this rhetorical move
has been made, the question then becomes how to activate
these dialogic strains within a particular work. Or even
more to the point, how does one activate strains that

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[1]Bakhtin does admit that certain species of lyric poetry may
approach monologism, but this is a limit that is never
reached.

normally fall outside the habitual range of a particular reader?

Such questions are even more important in the case of someone like Ezra Pound, whose views, writings, and speeches are not so much an embarrassment as a crisis of Modernism. Pound's existence demands an analysis of discourses that helped produce him that is as rigorous as the examination of discourses that he helped produce. Furthermore, one must interrogate the machineries that can simultaneously praise and condemn Pound's work. How, for instance, can Louis Zukofsky (a Jew) not only tolerate Pound's views, but choose to print anti-Semitic poems in An Objectivist's Anthology? How could the Bollingen committee award its first prize to Pound in 1948, ignoring the public outcry which led to a 40 year moratorium on governmental prizes for literature? Why would the public make such an outcry, being largely homophobic and anti-Semitic itself? In many ways, one's common sense in this case is like a cage preventing one not only from understanding such conflicts, but from examining those strains in Pound that might have led elsewhere than infamy. As Bob Perelman puts it in The Trouble With Genius, "there are other [than fascist] trails from most of Pound's words"(39). While neither Perelman nor I would recommend taking those trails in exclusion of the fascist ones, it also pays to examine how discourses can carry a variety of

ideological freight and how different ideologies make use of the same cultural material. The result prepares one to take part in a border war where previously subjects (whether they be Pound or Auden) were assigned positions as if they made fully conscious, fully independent moral choices. And no properly leftist critique should be willing to cede the arenas of politics and ideology to the Coliseums of morality.

But if explorations are trapped by cages (of common sense, textuality, sympathy or antipathy), perhaps one might begin with the concept of the cage itself. Such an approach might prove particularly interesting in examining the Pisan Cantos, given their scene of composition. The word "cage" inevitably evokes Pound's imprisonment in Pisa where he composed these Cantos, but in a wider sense it symbolizes the viewpoints that caged him in, limiting him on poetic, political, and social levels. The previous chapter discussed, via a comparison with classic Hollywood, how these viewpoints connected with a more general desire for control over the material at hand. Thus, the notion of imprisonment tends to hang like a specter over the most quintessential work of Ezra Pound, a specter which infects the critics as well. Frank Lentricchia, to take a most noteworthy example, tends to utilize the cliché of the prisoner's remorse when he states that the author of the

Pisan Cantos is the "best answer" to the Pound who valorized Mussolini and naive heroism in general(237). On a more Derridean level, Marjorie Perloff looks to the Pisan Cantos as a place where "the images keep interfering with one another"(189) in a manner which enacts an aesthetic renunciation of Fascism. There is a strong desire to redeem Pound's politics, and this is generally done by looking for a place (usually the Pisan Cantos) in his poems where, if only for a short time, he renounced them. My study takes off from the same point, partly because I feel my gravitation to the prison narrative in these Cantos contains (like any cliché or stereotype) small moments of truth combined with larger elements of attraction and falsehood. But to differ from the critical approaches that assume the Pisan Cantos must contain a large element of contrition, I will start from the premise that if an older Pound had any chance of converting from his Fascist allegiances, it would most likely occur during his stay at Pisa, a time when he had nothing to do but reflect on what it was like to be controlled and despised, and perhaps benefit from a case of amnesia(Bush 78). In contradiction to lore of the Pisan Cantos being a spontaneous outpouring, Pound's manuscript reveals several revisions(74). Thus, the cage itself becomes a symbol of doubleness, a place where the Fascist Pound might contend with another Pound not quite ever

formed. This doubled entity might resemble the very notebooks on which Pound composed the Pisan Cantos, folded in half so that the poem could be written on one side with "second thoughts" on the other. Adopting the optimism that asserts any individual may undergo a political conversion, I hope to use prosthetic techniques in order to imagine how "second thoughts" might suggest different poetic subjectivities for Pound. Instead of looking into the Cantos themselves for a fully formed conversion, I hope to encourage Pound's unfulfilled metamorphosis by bringing another cage to his Pisan one, a sort of phone booth to be used as a dressing room.

As I noted in the previous chapter, the comparisons between Hollywood and the rise of fascism have centered on the idea of control. Whether the production was a Hollywood film, a Model T, or a Nuremberg rally, the idea was to create a production that left no room for truly alternative interpretations. In contrast, John Cage has been a pioneer in using chance methods for relinquishing authorial control in aesthetic production. He makes a good addition to Pound's cage not only for his use of chance in general, however, but because his most famous tool for introducing chance has been the I-Ching or Book of Changes. This Asian connection, thanks to Pound's fascination with the Orient, makes the intrusion a bit less likely to be rejected by

Pound's poetic corpus. Whereas the I-Ching was originally
used for divining agricultural, business, and social
matters, Cage has taken the 64 possibilities (arrived at by
tossing three coins) in the book as a way of redirecting
both musical and poetic compositions. As I have suggested,
the poetics of Pound, Yeats, and Eliot arguably have a high
element of complexity but a low element of chance.
Therefore, I hope to use the I-Ching as a way of opening up,
to use Paul Morrison's phrase, "Utopian impulses"(4) in
Pound's work. If Pound at times "responded with enthusiasm
and credence to the speculative occultism"(Surette 62) of
the London set, there's a chance the Pisan Cantos might
yield to the mechanical occultism discussed in Chapter 2.
If I obtain enough response, perhaps I will achieve a rough
hologram of this doubled Pound, the one who treats his
second thoughts as equal thoughts, whose fascist Pisan cage
transforms into the aesthetic practices of John Cage, whose
name (Greg Ulmer points out) can be anagrammed into "Jo
Change"(106).

Canto LXXIV, I-Ching toss: The Well

The Winding Road of Precision

"The image of this hexagram is of a wooden pole being
dipped into the water"(127), an image visually similar to
the olive tree "washed in the Kiang and Han"(Pound 445).

Pound asks, "what whiteness will you add to this whiteness,
what candor," but the image takes on a murky doubleness. An
olive branch symbolizes peace in the mouth of a dove but
also suggests (in the mouth of Pound) a stubborn attachment
to Italy, perhaps even what Morrison refers to as "an inner
city of fascist man"(37). Still, the baptismal image of the
olive branch suggests a desire for repentance even if the
rhetorical phrasing betrays a bit too much confidence.
Later in the Canto Pound seems to ask a more sincere
question about change, "in short shall we look for a deeper
or is this the bottom"(458), but his methods differ from
mine. Pound associates contingent disruptions with
pollution and exploitation, "dumping in order to trouble the
waters / in the usurer's hell-a-dice"(461).

It is ironic that Pound expresses hostility to chance
since the line of change in the hexagram states, "You have
been so busy chasing your own thoughts around in ever-
decreasing circles that they have become useless to yourself
and anyone else"(128). The circularity of the well thus
shrinks down to the circularity of the water dish next to
which a leopard/Pound sits for "a day as a thousand
years"(451). This leopard alludes to Rilke's panther who,
as William French translates, "winds himself in tiniest
circles"(86). Even more hauntingly, sometimes "an image
enters [the panther's pupil], shudders through the soundless

flexing torso, / falls into the heart and dies." The digestive image suggests the leveling process that each new element suffers as it enters the panther. This process mirrors Pound's resistance to ideological change even at Pisa where he claims to surrender "neither the empire nor the temples plural / nor the constitution nor yet the city of Dioce"(454). Edwards and Vasse tell us that this latter city "was surrounded by seven concentric walls, each a different color, and the citadel was a treasure house"(56). Pity that an image didn't enter the panther's "heart and dice."

In the city of Di[o]ce one sees Pound's perennial fixation on the distribution of money, an interest which led him to the extremes of Radio Rome and Pisa. Though Pound doesn't spare Jews elsewhere in this Canto, he doesn't limit his accusations of usury to Jews alone: "so the total interest sweated out of the Indian farmers / rose in Churchillian grandeur"(446). This image of parasitism, however, contrasts The Well's alternate meaning of "a plant drawing water up out of the ground"(127), a much more gentle and natural picture. Pound's concentric circling around this issue would be much better served by the latter image, since interest and investment have allowed modern economies to exist on a global level, but Pound idealized the

precision of more simple economic theories like Douglas's ideas on social credit(Morrison 50).

Peter Nichols explains that the gravitation to "lyrical abstraction" often blinded Pound to his own ideologies(94), a statement which corresponds to The Well being one of the more abstract hexagrams. Sometimes things become almost parodically vague, such as in the following dictum, "that certain images be formed in the mind / to remain there"(466). This view of an eternal art congeals in allusions like "Degas Manet Guys unforgettable"(455), but the end result posits an almost spiritual art against the exchanges of the marketplace. The Well does confirm a desire for eternity in the Chinese saying, "The town may change, but the well remains the same"(127). In contrast to the Well's Eternity, however, Pound propounds an almost Freudian repetition. He takes Gassir as his model, who rebuilt the city of Fasa four times, and recommends the same insistence for Fascist Italy. James Joyce may be "also preoccupied with Gibraltar / and the Pillars of Hercules"(467), but Pound adopts a bastardized form of eternity in this Canto.

In sum, the part of the Hexagram referring to Pound's concentric mistakes stands as the most important element for this Canto. He exemplifies precision (repeating similar data) more than accuracy (achieving the right data) or even

an ability to change. As subjectivity, economics, and
politics grow more global and complex, the claim that "with
one day's reading a man may have the key in his hands" looks
more like a shot in the dark than a bull's-eye. Or even
more disturbingly, Pound presents in an early Canto a scene
"before hell mouth" where two mountains stand side by side,
each containing a concentric road "like a slow screw's
thread, / The angle almost imperceptible"(68). As William
Blake runs this road, making almost no upward progress, his
eyes are "Whirling like flaming cart-wheels" as if the
concentric fallacy has infected his very gaze. I would
argue that this image of Blake is a narcissistic one,
however, as suggested by the other mountain where Fiorentino
and Sordels gaze at themselves (and hell) in mirrors.
Perhaps a working title for the Cantos could be "Self
Portrait in a Complex Mirror," one with as many fragments as
a turtle plastron used for divination. One of the
reflections even leads back to the original Ezra, where
those who could not authenticate their Jewish lineage were
systematically excluded from the priesthood(Ryrie 627).
Thus, Pound's actions are a strange parody of Jewish
history, which itself at times becomes a haunting reflection
of anti-Semitism. Similarly, understanding the nature of
fascism requires seeing its reflections in the avant-
garde(Hewitt 7). Nothing is pure.

From Precision to Mathematics

Each I-Ching hexagram is formed by the combination of two trigrams representing various elements of the universe. Consequently, the hexagram implies both unity and separateness, and in this particular case wood and water come together in the form of the well. This element of montage forms an integral part not only of divination, but of Chinese pictorial language as well, a fact that fascinated both Ezra Pound and Sergei Eisenstein (Kenner 162). The concept of an unsolvable equation (which could be a Surrealist definition of montage) surfaces in Pound's discussion of war: "we have not yet calculated the sum gorilla + bayonet" (465). Pound here suggests that a lack of education has made the human race violent, but the concept of the equation itself may be more interesting than Pound's elitist pacifism. In his essay "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," Walter Benjamin defines politics via two-part equations: politics + aesthetics = fascism; aesthetics + politics = communism. The fact that such differing results can come from a mere reversal of the equation's terms is somewhat distressing and may in fact allude to the similarities between systems arising in a general age of mass politics. As William McCraw states, "it can be forgotten that Mussolini presented his nascent

movement as 'revolutionary' from the beginning. . . . adopting vocabulary of the Socialist Party"(50). Suddenly, the black and white of Benjamin's reversible equation seems gray in the oscillation.

The equation also figures in R.L. Rutsky's analysis of fascism in "The Mediation of Technology and Gender: *Metropolis*, Nazism, Modernism," only it is not so much the order of terms as the concept of equation itself, what Rutsky calls mediation, "which would restore coherence to an alienated, technologized modern world split by [these] dystopian alternatives"(11). Yet one wonders to what extent mediation constitutes fascism's appeal versus Nazism's threat, for such diverse practices as psychoanalysis and Hollywood film making also work through the logic of mediation. For his part, Benjamin places himself in diametrical opposition to a definition of fascism he has helped popularize. For fascism, "repression of (human) nature produces a mechanical, robot-like copy or 'imprint': an artificial, technologized nature"(Rutsky 22). In contrast, Benjamin celebrates mechanical reproduction as the possibility that gives the masses access to art, expertise, and ultimately, revolution. What Benjamin didn't foresee, however, was that fascism would counter the perceived alienation of technology not by denying it as he does, but

instead infusing it with the promise of organic wholeness.

In doing so, it embodied what Lutz Koepnick refers to as an

> expanded version of Benjamin's aestheticization
> thesis [where] fascism constitutes a phase of
> capitalist modernization in which the political
> dimension itself becomes a market item, a target
> of the kind of commodification and mass
> consumption Benjamin so intriguingly analyzed in
> the *Arcades Project*.(55)

Not only does this expanded version provide an explanation

for the similarities between fascist practices and seemingly

more innocent institutions, but it also suggests that

mediation is not integral to fascism per se, but imperative

to fascism's attempt to sell itself in the modern era.

Two Terms Equal a Third Meaning

By using the hexagram's combination of wood and water

as a guide, one blazes a path through the Canto that, as in

Roland Barthes' definition of the Third Meaning, focuses

attention on images rather than concepts. In his essay "The

Third Meaning: Research Notes on Several Eisenstein Stills,"

Barthes contemplates how such a method could completely

transform a film such as <u>Ivan the Terrible</u>:

> Imagine 'following' not Euphrosyne's machinations
> or even the character (as a diegetic entity or as
> a symbolic figure), not even, further, the
> countenance of the Wicked Mother, but only, within
> this countenance, that grimace, that black veil,
> the heavy, ugly dullness of that skin. You will
> have another film.(57)

Barthes' concept provides a way of collecting textual/filmic details that disrupts the informational and symbolic paradigms that funnel most systems of interpretation. Combining it with Cage's I-Ching method erases even more of the unconscious forces that might guide one's choice of gesture. And yet, while Barthes' description of the Third Meaning as obtuse ultimately can yield no more than exegesis as haiku, one may supplement this dandyism by returning the Third Meaning to a new kind of structuralism that is ultimately not only utopian but, as Derrida describes in Specters of Marx, messianic: "The messianic . . . would be urgency, imminence but, irreducible paradox, a waiting without horizon of expectation"(168). As Derrida implies in his deliberately vague but hopeful concept of justice, the point is not to avoid a goal or structure, but to avoid limiting what form justice can take. Formal experiments that even momentarily derail habitual thought patterns (which thus far have failed to enact any permanent alternatives to capitalism) encourage such messianism on a very mechanical level. In sum, this version of the third meaning (achieved in this case by combining two trigrams into a completely different hexagram) seems a paradoxically useful tool for combatting the "Third Way" of Nazi mediatory logic.

But is following the deliberately fragmented path of the image inherently ahistorical? On the one hand the method seems to be self-consciously poetic, and poetry, particularly Modernist poetry, has been criticized for the montage of images it attempts to pass off as historical relationships. When a poem like <u>The Waste Land</u> places too many historical events side by side, the suggested equivalence reduces the historicity of each image. The mere referencing of historical details in such a manner opposes the attempts at exhaustive accounts that traditional historians have espoused. But there are dissenting voices, of course, even within the discipline of history itself. Citing Aby Warburg[2] as his mentor in a book aptly titled <u>Clues, Myths, and the Historical Method</u>, Carlo Ginzburg presents the idea of an historical approach that resembles an investigation by Sherlock Holmes: the right inferences from the right "clue" can unleash a whole chain of causalities that a more thorough investigation might pass over in its own monotony. In their recent book <u>Practicing New Historicism</u>, Gallagher and Greenblatt argue for a similar ethic. In an age replete with *grands récits*, they recommend cultivating the *puncturing* capability of the *petit récit*. Thus "new historicism becomes a history of

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[2] and his "favorite saying," that "God is in the detail"(22).

possibilities"(16) as critics find new ways of finding (or
even developing) such punctures in the *grand récit*.

Chasing Wood and Water

In the case of Canto LXXIV, following the chance
combinations of the I-Ching ultimately produces a
paradoxical structure in the conversation between water and
wood: "Glass-eye Wemyss treading water / and addressing the
carpenter from the seawaves"(462). In order to find out the
nature of that conversation, however, one must follow the
movement of water and wood throughout. In this particular
meeting, wood becomes associated with practicality and
structure via the carpenter. It is hard and predictable in
a way that more resembles technological than organic
modernism. In fact, if one holds to the traditional
association of woman with ocean, Wemyss' half of the
equation has more affinity with Rutsky's description of
feminine, Occult, and organic modernism. The combination of
wood and water is further emphasized in the image of
"[Graces] possibly in the soft air / with the mast held by
the left hand"(463), almost as if the right hand remains to
connect with the ocean/Graces. Here the image of the body
holds these two elements together, as it does in fascist
ideology and its goal, as Peter Burger notes, "to put back
together the 'halves' of man that have been torn

asunder"(qtd. in Rutsky 23). The organic metaphor bears a certain irrefutability, as biological facts of existence are very unforgiving to rearrangement.

Earlier in the poem, wood stands opposite not water, but culture itself: "300 years culture at the mercy of a tack hammer"(454). At the poem's close, "liquid is certainly a / property of the mind"(469), which confirms the balancing of the water and wood equation to connect water with aesthetics. Or, as Friedrich Schiller explains, "we must be at liberty to restore by means of a higher Art this wholeness in our nature"(qtd. in Rutsky 23). Ultimately, aesthetics does not reunite nature and technology into a coherent entity, but instead raises technology (in all its senses) to the irrefutable status of Nature. Nazism gains its support in the mass spectacle of Nuremberg, but aesthetics attains its truest and most horrible form in arguing the necessity of the gas chambers. Or in the case of "the mayor of Worgl / . . . on whose book-shelf was the Life of Henry Ford / and also a copy of the Divina Commedia"(Pound 464), an aesthetic text of holy hierarchies confirms the great popularizer of mechanical and human assembly lines. Hauntingly, if this Canto of equations is to be read as an equation itself, the last image of water (and last image) in this Canto is the Lethe.

Canto LXXVI, I-Ching Toss: Army

This Canto ends by proclaiming, "woe to them that conquer with armies / and whose only right is their power"(483). And of course Pound has a lot to lament, for all of Europe has been razed: "in Mt. Segur there is wind space and rain space / no more an altar to Mithras"(472). Meditating on broken statues and lost friends, Pound asks, "will the world ever take up its course again"(473). As opposed to the timeless art images in Canto LXXIV, Pound focuses on extinct paintings with no reprints. During the war, "towns like Rapallo were bombed insistently, and slowly but surely many of the art treasures of Northern Italy were damaged"(Bush 72). Amidst this wreckage, there is only "a lone ant from a broken ant-hill"(478) to write things back to sanity.

The hexagram cautions this ant, however, that "cooperation is very much the order of the day"(45). This may be a problem for someone who, according to William Butler Yeats, possessed "a desire personally to insult the world"(Logenbach 73). This tendency makes humility a momentary quality for Pound, one soon to be eclipsed by the hyperbolic insult that makes him such an unsympathetic figure. In addition to imagining himself as an ant, Pound admires the grace under pressure of "the cat [who] walked

the porch rail at Gardone"(478). This belief in the individual may correspond to the fetishization of the fascist ruler in all his brilliant violence: "no dolphin faster in moving / nor the flying azure of the wing'd fish under Zoagli / when he comes out into the air, living arrow"(479). Thus, to defend Pound by claiming he viewed Mussolini "not so much as a dictator as an artifex"(<u>Gender of Modernism</u> 357) is a bit disingenuous when discussing a political system that specializes in aestheticizing politics. The "living arrow" in the poem is both a weapon and an art form.

Instead, one might ask, as does Cairns Craig, if there is not an implicit connection between the authority of high art and authoritarian politics(23-4). This is also a major theme in "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" where a traditional art work's "cult value" depends to a large extent on its inaccessibility to the masses(678). In order to counteract this tendency, Pound would have to establish some sense of connection to the masses he has tended to eschew. Perhaps he has gained some of this sense, as Frank Lentricchia suggests, from the kindness of the African-American soldier who broke the rules to make him a desk for his typewriter(238). When Pound does express a desire for companionship, it comes from someone "able to feel / all the ribs of his cow"(478), an image

which seems simultaneously condescending and humble. But for a moment, at least, he tips the scales away from the deified artifex when he holds up "Miss Norton" as someone whose "memory for the conversation" surpasses that of James Joyce(476).

Memorizing the conversation "of idiots" should not be underestimated precisely because Pound's self-designated job is to reconstruct, through memory, a Europe destroyed by "idiots." That Pound may have been one of the idiots who helped destroy it does not prevent him from participating in its reinvention. In cases like this, the immediate contexts of Pound's references should be read as overdetermined, with subcontexts displaced or buried. As Marshall says of The Army, the "bottom trigram is water and the top one is earth, signifying that there is a great mass of energy locked in and confined"(45). If the castrated protagonist of The Sun Also Rises can fixate on policemen's batons for more reasons than one, there is no reason Pound can't be read that way. To assume that all of Pound's images are conscious artistic choices makes him the same sort of artifex he made of Mussolini. Not that Pound wouldn't desire such a conflation, as Perelman rightly notes: "Pound's fascination with genius is thoroughly entangled with his Fascist commitments"(29). But excavating Pound's unintentionality, by contrast, opens up all the locked energy of a city made

with trap doors that connect unexpected locations. Ideally, I would like to activate some of the excitement Hélène Cixous expresses at the thought of rethinking the patriarchy: "We are living in an age where the conceptual foundation of an ancient culture is in the process of being undermined by millions of a species of mole (Topoi, ground mines) never known before"(585). I hope to undermine Pound's poetics, my critical methods, and Pound's cultural assumptions in a manner that doesn't destroy but starts the story anew. In this goal I am to some extent aligned with Pound who imagines rebuilding Europe starting at Pisa, but only to the extent that Pisa or Italy doesn't grow like a seed. Any rebuilding must be as mechanical and unpredictable as excavation can be, and it must take place in a space where, as Donna Haraway puts it, "no 'natural' architectures constrain system design"(610).

Canto LXXVII, I-Ching Toss: View

The hexagram consists of gentle wind over the gentle earth, and also resembles a tower. This combination of images conveys the desire to watch passively and contemplate the situation. One of the lines of change in the toss suggests, however, the possibility of adopting a viewpoint so subjective it can alienate you from a larger audience.

For obvious reasons, the tower evokes this Canto's line about Freud: "'He won't' said Pirandello 'fall for Freud, he (Cocteau) is too good a poet'"(489). The density of this phrase suggests the way in which Pound tends to use names throughout the Cantos. In addition to having the packed significance of dream images, the oblique references are designed to elicit nods of ideological agreement and evoke "Barthes' Stalinist world where there is no difference between naming and judging"(Nichols 102). There are many ways in which Pound might object to Freud, but on a basic level he undermines the sense of artistic mastery so prized by the modernists. Rather than focusing on literature as an art form, Freud tended to read it symptomatically, a skill he may have picked up from Gustave Morelli. The desire for mastery, linked to Pound's coverage compulsion in the previous chapter, is represented in this Canto by the city of Faasa and characterized by the number 4: "4 times was the city remade, / now in the heart indestructible / 4 gates, the 4 towers"(485). The number 4 suggests geometrical order as well as grand extent, as in "the four corners of the globe." The four towers also allow one to see in all directions. By contrast, Freud's defense mechanisms work by indirection and without the control of the subject. The previous section, however, suggested how using the Freudian terms of overdetermination, condensation, and displacement

(without an allegiance to depth psychology) can be valuable in interpreting the Cantos. This interpretation of Freud shows that, at the depths of the psychological machine, we find politics.

But this Canto represents a desire not only to see everything, but to watch in peace. Pound rather fondly recalls "a feller / settin' in a rudimentary shack doin' nawthin' / not fishin', just watchin' the water"(486). This image stands against the opening of the Canto which interrogates the purpose of action by presenting such unromantic events as digging, inspecting mass graves, and Kungfutseu tripping and crashing into a shelf of glassware. To what extent these events are displaced versions of Pound's own wartime activities is unclear, but the radically idiosyncratic nature of these activities is suggested by Margherita "tending her rabbit hutch, / O Margaret of the seven griefs / who has entered the lotus"(491). Similarly, Pound attended to his own radical beliefs that ultimately forced him into a bitter lotus land of Pisa. Almost as if he can't admit such a huge mistake, however, Pound defends his actions by comparing them with his contemporary surroundings. In contrast to the gentle wind of The View, Pound describes a "wind mad as Cassandra"(495), having previously offered the blanket justification, "nor does the martin against the tempest / fly as in the calm air"(488).

This call for activism may ring true, but is rebuilding a city four times, or for that matter violently gripping onto beliefs without reexamination, a form of action or inaction?

Canto LXXVIII, I-Ching Toss: Gentle Wind

A hint of wind first appears "by the square elm of Ida / [where] 40 geese are assembled"(497). The verb "assembled" personifies the geese as congressmen or judges, and the trial of Paris for stealing Helen of Troy was held at Ida. The ambiguity surrounding this or any crime of passion sets the proper tone for evaluating Pound's actions.

Pound follows the wind looking for "that presage / in the air / which means that nothing will happen that will / be visible to the sargeants (*sic*)"(503). The desire to escape visibility here may correspond to the desire to escape the panoptic regulations of ideology, for the most important point Foucault makes in <u>Discipline and Punish</u> is that the carceral relationship implicit in Jeremy Bentham's Panopticon structures almost all of our social relations. Instead of wondering whether the prison warden is watching what they are doing, people now compare their actions to the ambiguous gaze of "the norm," wondering whether or not they measure up. In other words, every aspect of existence behaves as the tower which seeks to "induce in the inmate a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the

automatic functioning of power" where a "real subjection is born mechanically from a fictitious relation"(Foucault 201-2). Thus, one may not so easily dismiss Pound's apology to Allen Ginsberg for his "suburban prejudice" of anti-Semitism. While the phrase does betray the elitist disgust of Adorno, it also must be placed alongside the anti-Semitism that swept through America less than a decade after WWII was over. The hysteria of HUAC, directed more towards Jews than any other group, shows how "suburban" prejudice is not benign. The organizing principles of suburban communities, extended today in the so-called planned or gated community, imply a fear of difference which threatens their security. The successful condensation of anti-Communism and anti-Semitism in the 1950s further suggests how the slogan format of mass media can so easily infiltrate a willing, TV-owning populace. In making this sort of connection, I mean to emphasize how everyone, including a poet like Ezra Pound, is susceptible to the social milieu. Thus, while Pound collaborated with fascist Italy in WWII, Hollywood in the 1930s avoided making anti-Nazi films for fear of losing German markets. In either case, one would do well to "recapture the excitement that was [or is] fascism--not in order to reevaluate or revalorize the phenomenon, but in order to comprehend the sources of its energy"(Hewitt 4).

To further complicate Pound's fascist sympathies, one might note how harmless certain fascist tenets may seem when removed from their contexts or placed in different ones. As Cairns Craig explains, the "view of fascism as a 'right-wing' phenomenon was not so self-evident in the 1920s as it appears now"(264). Instead, it was viewed as a competing (with socialism) alternative to an intolerable capitalism. In The Art of Being Ruled, in fact, Wyndham Lewis often speaks of "fascismo or the soviet" as if they are more united in their difference from democratic capitalism than divided by their own ideologies. And considering how Marxists fetishize praxis, it might be interesting to note that Pound's attraction to Italy was part of a growing "conviction that fascism was replacing the ineffectual temporising of democracy with a radical philosophy of action"(Nichols 97). Pound's other attraction to Italy was of course its art and culture, a grandeur like the "Slow lift of long banners / Roma profugens Sabinorum in terras"(498). Why not believe that such a heritage is connected with Roman soil and the ancient people of Italy? Likewise, Martin Heidegger's romanticized notion of the German Volk sounds relatively benign. When he claims that his work "is intimately rooted in and related to the life of the peasants" which in turn "comes from a centuries-long and irreplaceable rootedness in the Alemannian-Swabian

soil"(427), it seems like an infinite distance from the
mechanized, efficient racism of the Nazi regime precisely
because these sorts of statements are often made about
American soil and blood. But then, by 1931, 30 American
states had passed sterilization laws(Stanfield 159). Given
such coincidences, fascism sounds more and more like an
historical bullet to dodge.

Being aware of these innocent pathways between suburban
patriotism and fascist violence requires a sensitivity to
the breezy "touch of sadism in the back of [one's]
neck"(Pound 499). When Confucius, one of Pound's idols,
compared this hexagram to the "relation between superiors
and inferiors [where the] grass must bend when the wind
blows upon it"(qtd. in Legge 191), he simultaneously
presaged the gentle ways in which coercion could operate,
Pound's fascination with strong leaders(including
Confucius), and the modernist fixation with mass politics.
In thinking about any nation's or individual's capacity for
fascist practice, one must know how things move from the
superficial caress to the blow, from the gated community to
the concentration camp.

Canto LXXIX, I-Ching Toss: Modesty

This Canto vacillates between a sense of forced modesty
and nervous frenzy. On the one hand, we are presented with

images of "Old Ez" folding blankets and imagining himself as a dog. On the other hand, things end with so many lynxes that the Canto seems overrun. These animals are sacred to Dionysus and are called upon to protect orchards and wine. Pound, however, seems desperate and unsure of them, imagining the detention center as an orchard filled with an execution, retaliation, and burning leaves. At times Pound thinks the lynxes may be leopards and, trying to appease them, wonders if "lynxes eat thorn leaves"(511). The numerous references to leaves emphasize this Canto's concern with the art of poetry and with Pound's epic in particular(leaves of paper, leaves of grass--Whitman, laurels). Leaves of thorn and fire, combined with the presence of Dionysus, depict a work that is both disordered and damaged. The lynx may be sacred to the frenzied character of Dionysus, but its name is a pun on "links,"[3] and thus invokes Pound's tortured, ambivalent attempt to create a coherent poem and life.

One could argue that Dionysus has intruded into Pound's epic, displacing reasonable Apollo as the god of poetry. In that sense, he operates like a psychic phantom,[4] a foreign

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[3]This pun, and Pound's attitude toward unity, is especially apparent in the Canto's first mention of the lynx: "O Lynx, my love, my lovely lynx"(507).

[4]See the beginning of chapter 2 for a fuller explanation of Abraham and Torok's theory of the psychic phantom.

yet empathetic consciousness, within the links of the poem.
Perhaps his presence, as yet not mentioned in the opening
lines of the poem, leads Pound to claim, "I like a certain
number of shades in my landscape"(504). When Pound does
encounter the destructive power of the lynxes that protect
the orchard/compound, this sympathy leads him to imagine the
pleasures of Dionysus, an act resulting in one of those
"eerie moments" of the Pisan Cantos when Pound seems to lose
his sense of self(Kenner 486). This moment is also
predicted at the Canto's opening by a woman whose hair
suddenly turns white, as if she has just seen a phantom.
The presence of Dionysus brings suddenness and abandonment
to a poem characterized, largely, by control.[5] Here is a
prime moment for another Pound to be remade out of the
uncertainty of the old after "three nights amid
lynxes"(511). Amidst the confusion, a "fruit has a fire
within it, / Pomona, Pomona / No glass is clearer than are
the globes of this flame"(510). The pomegranate forms a
transparent chamber of transformation born from two types of
modesty, self-effacement and self-abandonment. As such, it
represents something of an anecdote to the hero engineer
whom Cecelia Tichi finds haunting Pound's poetic corpus.[6]

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[5]See the introduction and section on Pound in Chapter 3.

[6]See Chapter 3 of Shifting Gears.

In Canto II, panthers and leopards overtake Acoetes' ship, and his crew turn into dolphins--their punishment for the hubris of attempting to capture Dionysus. The Cantos thus open with the possibility of transformation through punishment related directly to the phantom haunting Canto 79. Despite the presence of Dionysus, however, Pound betrays a nervousness over the fate of his poem. In addition to making several leaf references, Pound is reminded of the Constitution, the consummate document of importance. As these stakes hang over the Canto, Pound follows the movements of "birds on a wire," and his changing enumerations evoke the concept of wiring a poem/song together. This image reaffirms my insistence in the first chapter that Modernist aesthetics are always influenced by changes in technology. After all, the "new Bechstein [piano] is electric"(Pound 505). This latter image should lead one to ask, if Dionysus has infiltrated this Canto, to what extent is he both Jewish and electric?

While in the previous chapter I cited James Beninger's connection of the machine age with what he calls the "Control Revolution," there is, as I've suggested, a history of disruption within the machine itself. As I've previously mentioned, the first encounters between film technology/ photography and its subject matter tended to produce a surplus of unforeseeable information. The idea that the

camera can be more unpredictable than the human eye suggests
another reading of Walter Benjamin's statement that film
would teach people to operate "in a state of distraction"
(_Illuminations_ 240). While Benjamin primarily alludes to a
populace that absorbs new technologies in an absent-minded
state, the filmic apparatus itself provides distraction by
revealing details that for all intents and purposes were
invisible. As Benjamin phrases it, the "camera introduces
us to unconscious optics as does psychoanalysis to
unconscious impulses"(237). The visual fields opened by the
camera effectively distract the viewer from older patterns
of seeing and organizing the world. In Dionysian fashion,
no less, the camera's encounter with the world introduces an
element of chance which eludes conscious control. And as
for Pound's attempts to wire his poem together, they begin
to sound more and more like a roulette wheel: "5 of 'em now
on 2; / on three; 7 on 4"(506). His own apparatus of
control has transformed into a revolving game of chance.

Inasmuch as Dionysus promotes an aesthetic of
wandering, he expresses sympathies with Jewish history as
well. In their aptly titled book of wandering _A Thousand
Plateaus_, Deleuze and Guattari describe Hebrew history as
passional and deterritorialized, valorizing the rhetorical
possibilities of flight(122-33). Dionysus seems to possess
the same qualities when Pound prays, "O lynx [links], keep

the phylloxera from my grape vines"(509). While disease is inherently transgressive in its movement, the vines of Dionysus possess their own wandering qualities. In making his plea, however, Pound privileges a cultivated vine over a wild one, and is further warned (by?), "Eat of it not in the under world"(520). This latter command suggests another opposition between Pound and A Thousand Plateaus. Deleuze and Guattari define a plateau as "any multiplicity connected to other multiplicities by superficial underground stems so as to produce a rhizome"(22). This state is desirable because it provides more avenues of flight/movement (links) than the repressive (arborescent) pattern of most discourses. Pound, in trying to keep things above ground, opposes the "superficial underground" paradox of the plateau. He seeks to impose an arborescent pattern on a rhizomic plant. If Pound succeeds, it is only with a vine that doesn't belong to Dionysus, who also goes by the alias "Electric Bechstein."

Canto, LXXX, I-Ching Toss: Obstruction

When Pound admits, "I have been hard as youth sixty years"(533), it's difficult to know whether it is a boast or an apology. On one level it suggests that Pound has not given up his youthful ideals like so many other artists and radicals. On the other hand, it admits a lack of maturity

and intellectual suppleness. From Norman Mailer's
perspective, such a statement admits an inability to do
proper history. To do proper history, "an eyewitness who is
a participant but not a vested partisan is required, further
he must be not only involved but ambiguous in his own
proportions"(Mailer 142). When Pound claimed that
"economics are not the muddle that they are made out to
be"(qtd. in Scott 368), he ceased to be ambiguous, and when
he broadcast on Radio Rome he was definitely a vested
partisan.

Pound tried to dispel ambiguity via the condensed
phrase, the sparkling aphorism in the continuing tradition
of Nietzsche, Walter Benjamin, and Roland Barthes among
others. This chapter is likewise complicit with this
tradition and all its possibilities and limitations. Of
course, this method is so synonymous with advertising that
it is hard to tell whether it is another case of capitalism
appropriating the avant-garde or whether the avant-garde
learned it from advertising in the first place. Thus, we
all find ourselves, thanks to the problematic relationship
of "an expert to an inexpert," "on the damn'd hard bench
waiting the horses / and the parade"(Pound 517) along with
Leopold Bloom and the potted meat commercials tumbling
around in his head. The parade, with its public, orderly,
yet glamorous display, becomes one model of how to present

ideas to the public, relatively brief like a three-dimensional aphorism. Unfortunately, it is also the model of the Nuremberg rallies and their utter lack of informational content. If Walter Benjamin's <u>Arcades Project</u> is a form of historical restoration, Pound suggests its underside when he hopes "they have not destroyed the / old theatre / by restorations"(516), the last word being the perfect pun on the blur between capitalist consumption and political progress. In attempting to engage the popular, the aphorism or fragment flirts with the paradox that Guy Debord reminds us of--the spectacle offers many models of false revolution(57). Perhaps one of the lessons of the Situationists, however, is to think in the mind-bending terms of following the false models of revolution until one finds an opening to a viable one.

Whether or not Pound has the ability to be such a détourniste is another matter, and his detentions in Pisa and at St. Elizabeths are an ironic counterpoint to wandering the streets against their economic will. Likewise, his aphorisms or allusions can be so dense that they represent the mass of a star about to explode in on itself. This density comes from the combination of the fascist ideal of equating name with utterance(Morrison 38), Pound's extremely broad array of knowledge, and ironically, his penchant for dilletantism(Nichols 3). Beyond the

obstruction, detention, and density, however, "beyond the stockade there is chaos and nothingness"(521). Pound's avant-garde of the fragment, then, may actually operate as a kernel of fear. Similarly, those who champion the fragment for its own sake would do well to consider how fascism might be its own terrible avant-garde.

Canto LXXXI, I-Ching Toss: Repairing Decay

There are at least two efficient but unsatisfying machines here, a state with a lot of Catholicism but little religion and a "local" folk dance that is performed in the same manner everywhere(537-8). The first machine uses religion as a means of ideological control while the second presents a reproducible politics and lucrative tourism. As efficient as such use of religion and kitsch has been, it does not address the higher (or lower if you are a Freudian) questions posed by art and its constant power to renew: "there came new subtlety of eyes into my tent. . . careless or unaware it had not the / whole tent's room / nor was place for the full [knowing] / interpass, penetrate"(540). Such knowledge does not follow the normal rules of time and space, an interesting implication for someone whose time and space are completely beyond his control. Associated with "what thou lov'st well," this knowledge and art can cause Elysium to materialize "in the halls of hell"(541).

If the trains running on time (Mussolini's boast) is
all about the rules of time and space, then this subtlety
has no truck with efficiency. It causes Pound to condemn
his vanity only to question what his vanity may indeed be:
"to have done instead of not doing / this is not
vanity"(541). Then, as if this generalization horrifies
even Pound, he specifies activities of a bit more genteel
tradition:

> To have, with decency, knocked
> That a Blunt should open
>   To have gathered from the air a live tradition
> or from a fine old eye the unconquered flame
> This is not vanity.(542)

The first and last examples remain safely within the senses,
the word, and the gaze. The second example ostensibly
refers to Pound's contributions to literature, specifically
his role in developing the modernist canon. It seems as if
Pound is here trying to diminish the political significance
of his life as if that is the only way to deal with the
horror he feels connected to. The phrase "live tradition"
troubles this retreat into art, however, as it not only has
an Occult significance, but also reminds us of the political
life that any social institution can have. This moment of
contrition reminds us again of the Biblical Ezra "praying
and confessing, weeping and throwing himself down before the
house of God"(Ryrie 637) because his people have

committed the sin of intermarriage. Both Ezra's may be sorry, but are they sorry for the right reasons?

The godfather of efficiency (that enemy to decay) Henry Ford should stand as the advertiser's and avant-gardist's answer to anyone who would attempt to separate art from politics--his famous Greenfield Village, a collage of real objects from 18th and 19th century small-town life. Of the town when it first opened, Ford said, "When we are through, we shall have reproduced American life as lived"(qtd. in Batchelor 9). This hyperreal town dedicated to the quintessential (and thus exclusive) American experience with "three watchmakers, but no bank"(10) represents another example of gathering from the air a "live tradition." Just as the eyes that Pound sees in his tent interpenetrate one another (in a different kind of efficiency), the "right" tradition and the "live" tradition for Pound and Ford keep changing places until neither Pound's radio broadcasts nor the anti-Semitic articles in Ford's "International Weekly" The Dearborn Independent can be separated from these museum pieces.

Canto LXXXII, I-Ching Toss: Revolution

Revolution, in the I-Ching's terms, is formed from two elements of mutual antipathy, fire and water. This Canto begins with the unlikely equation of Pound with one of the

soldiers' dogs because they both stop to watch a cloud(543).
The ironic moment of shared poetic insight elicits a
reminiscence on past artistic relationships both literal and
imagined. But when the issue of payment for manuscripts
comes up, the antipathy between artists and an
uncomprehending audience carries the same uncertainty about
art's status introduced in the first stanza. Ezra Pound's
goal of patronage for artists, like the Biblical Ezra's
stipulation that no one may "impose taxes, tribute, or duty
on any of the priests, Levites, singers, gatekeepers, temple
servants or other workers at this house of God"(Ryrie 634),
seems irredeemably banished to either the past or the
future. First, there is the "Ladyship" that would rather
rearrange the furniture than read a book when she can't
sleep. Next, there is the readership that would place too
narrow a boundary on artistic meaning, represented in "Miss
Tomczyk, the medium / baffling the society for metaphysical
research"(544). Finally, there is the (not coincidentally
Jewish) businessman who pretends to be a patron of the arts
but in reality is completely ignorant of them. Nowhere is
there a reader capable of interrogating Pound on his
politics. Nowhere is there a reader capable of properly
understanding Pound on an aesthetic level either, which
reminds him of the lonely Whitman, "still suspect / four
miles from Camden"(546).

With Pound contemplating the possibility of being
forgotten and instead desiring to slip peacefully into the
earth "by an arm's width embracing thee," one might look for
a deathbed confession. As with the truth about war,
unfortunately, it has trouble arriving "thru the
impenetrable / crystalline, indestructible / ignorance of
locality"(545). Here Pound suggests that being locked in
one place may prevent one from making proper
generalizations, but Pound's own localities may actually be
detrimental to a political reinvention. Is it possible to
be a political prisoner and not feel wronged by your
guardian/oppressor? If one agrees with the Frankfurt
School's premise that pure critique is psychologically
insufficient for political change, then Pound's individual
situation at Pisa can't seem promising. There is no purer
critique of one's actions than imprisonment, and the most we
can expect from Pound is a displaced denigration of his
fascist, "triumphal" commitment to proper names(Morrison
19), summed up in the phrase "ignorance of locality."
Anything more would be as "extravagant" as the 6th line of
the hexagram, whose image is that of a bird burning its own
nest.[7] For someone of Pound's self-righteousness, self-
critique might be as extreme an action as suicide. In this

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[7]The image and its description as "extravagant" come from
Legge, p. 190.

case, such an imagined subversion requires, like the "counselors" hired to frustrate Ezra's rebuilding of the Jewish temple, sabotage from an outside source.

Canto LXXXIII, I-Ching Toss: Provision

William Butler Yeats, one of Pound's old masters, must appear at the beginning in order to be reborn later. Yeats, like any famous poet, gives provision to both acolytes and the masses. So is it with recognition or disgust that Yeats remarks, "Nothing affects these people except our conversation"(548)? Given his well documented distaste for commoners (alluded to later in the Canto), the comment most likely refers to the frustration at having people more interested in Yeats the persona rather than Yeats the poet. On a more radical level, however, the comment can be read as a leveling of discourse. Especially when a poet becomes a celebrity, everything he says or does matters, has real political effect. Pound even more literally embodies this universality of utterance in his wartime radio broadcasts which virtually brought his poetic production to a halt (Nichols 138). On a moral and political level, various types of discourse collapse into utterances in time and space, an ambiguity reflected in Cantrell and Swinson's description of the Cantos as "a textbook for change"(113). The only difference in "conversation" comes in how many

people are exposed to any given utterance. Oftentimes the
oral or prose statements of the high modernists are
dismissed as inferior to the poetry which, among other
things, allowed them to rise above quotidian prejudices.
Not only does such reasoning arbitrarily raise one form of
discourse over another, but it is rather disingenuous since
poets such as Eliot and Yeats (if not Pound) were subtle
enough to know that their prose statements might be more
quotable to the masses than their poetry could ever be.
They did not reserve prose for their substandard rhetoric,
but for their political urgencies. It is for this reason
that Pound's "status as a hero within the neo-fascist
movement remains secure"(McCraw 56).

Thus, what any speaker needs is a prosification of any
utterance that threatens to rise above rational inquiry.
Otherwise, writers only stand to lose from being "placed
upon a pedestal." To continue the feminist metaphor, for
instance, analyzing the Surrealists as transgressive and
completely self-determining geniuses not only contradicts
Surrealist ideas about creativity,[8] but makes their sexism
all the more willful and inhumane. While it is both of
these things to some extent, Surrealism makes even more

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[8]In extolling the virtues of Surrealist method over
individual genius, André Breton claimed in the "First
Surrealist Manifesto," "We have no talent. . ."(123).

sense when its followers are viewed as subjects in a France with the weakest/youngest European tradition of women writers and voters. This perspective not only mitigates their views to some extent, but also contributes to a greater understanding as to how misogyny can be distributed and perpetuated in the culture at large. With this perspective in mind, Pound must be taken seriously both when he refers to his prejudice as "suburban" and when he gives us a less than adulatory portrait of Yeats "dawdling around Notre Dame / in search of whatever [can be turned into a symbol]"(548).

In keeping with these thoughts and the I-Ching toss of Provision, rebirth for these figures must occur in the form of digestion and descent. First, "Brother Wasp"(552) must build a house of the mud that surrounds him. He makes a fitting figure for the old Pound not only because of the filial reference to unromantic surroundings, but because WASP as an acronym for White Anglo-Saxon Protestant summarizes Pound's position of suburban Xenophobia. This ingenuity makes Pound think about escapes from his own imprisonments in the form of "Bulagaio's cat that with a well timed leap / could turn the lever-shaped door handle." The reference to a "Mr. Walls" in the next line reminds us that someone can be his own prison and that the best "well timed leap" may be multiple leaps of the imagination. The

fourth line of the hexagram supports this imagery: "Looking with a tiger's downward unwavering glare, and with his desire that impels him to spring after spring, he will fall into no error"(Legge 115). In reference to the wasp, however, being Mr. Walls also suggests a total transformation by moving through a digestive system into another state of being--from mud to structure. This moving from the human to the nonhuman in order to regain a new humanity can work in the same way as the science-fiction narratives of Joanna Russ and Octavia Butler in _Female Man_ and _Imago_. In each case, the organic determinism is cast aside for cyborgian imagery that literalizes a radical desire to completely reconstruct "the boundaries of daily life, in partial connection with others, in communication with all our parts"(Haraway 621). Perhaps then, the only way that Pound could change into the new being desired in the introduction, a new ideological creation, would be for him to become the wasp he imagines in a form of in vitro birth: "an infant, green as new grass, / has stuck its head or tip / out of Madame La Vespa's bottle"(553). This reading is also supported by the hexagram, which draws on the legend of a tortoise (Pound in his reactionary modes?) able to feed off of the air (by taking the wasp as inspiration).

When the "infant has descended, / from mud on the tent roof to Tellus / like to like colour he goes amid grass-blades"(553). Likewise, a rebirth from Pound's fascist and anti-Semitic tendencies requires a descent from his mudslinging position of authority. It also requires an ability to be lost, a green infant among the complexity of green grass blades (versus the "serried lynxes [links]" Pound desires in Canto 79)--by definition of "rebirth" a lost sense of former self. The stakes of such a change are suggested by the human situation in _Imago_. When Jodah recommends to the human characters in the first chapter, "You should stay and mate with constructs or with Oankali [because] the children we construct are free of inherent flaws"(559), they express their fear of giving up (changing) their "humanity." Pound engages in a related defense mechanism when he moves from these stakes to a discussion of Yeats' limitations. "Uncle William" is predictably elitist, "would not eat ham for dinner / because peasants eat ham for dinner," and Occult, "hearing nearly all Wordsworth / for the sake of conscience but / preferring Ennemosor on Witches"(554). Similar critiques could be made of Pound, an aesthetic elitist whose final version of Occultism would be his allegiance to suspect economic theories(Logenbach 134). "Stone Cottage in Sussex by the waste moor" (where Yeats and Pound lived together) links the two poets by way of

imprisonment, cages and houses of stone standing for so much more/moor ideological limitation. With reference to the "eyes, this time my world, / [which] pass and look *from* mine / between my lids"(555), there is allusion to a connection between the two figures, but on the whole Pound seems as reticent about talking to/about himself as the humans in Imago are loathe to grow tentacles to improve their genetic strain.

The transformation invoked and displaced in this Canto should not be looked upon as a lost opportunity so much as one that is not fully realized. Furthermore, one should suspect that any conversion tale or master narrative possesses limitations to be improved upon. When Pound exclaims that "No man who has passed a month in the death cells / believes in cages for beasts"(550), the finitude of "a month" should be translated into spatial and conceptual dimensions as well. Not only will Pound spend a limited amount of time in Pisa, but there are also limits to the types and durations of conversions he will undergo. Consequently, the Pisan Cantos may very well have a "split focus" that gains moral insight while it also laments the fall of fascism(Nichols 169). Ultimately, the insights in the Cantos are not so much about Pound as what we do with Pound. Perhaps the most valuable lessons he and figures

like De Man teach us is that a corpus doesn't stand or fall
like a row of dominoes but instead presents a complex field
of genius and political accountability.

CHAPTER 5
SHUFFLING ELIOT'S CARDS

Introduction

Just as I chose the I-Ching to direct my analysis of

Pound based upon his interests, I choose one of Eliot's

occult objects of attention as a way of imagining impulses

not fully realized in his work. In Chapter 3 I noted how

Eliot invoked the tarot deck in <u>The Waste Land</u> only to

ignore the most basic element of a deck of cards--their

implicit connection with chance. Thus, instead of shuffling

and dealing the cards, Eliot chose images from the deck to

"suit [his] own convenience"(CP 70). This choice on Eliot's

part is not only in keeping with the modernist desire for

control I have already described, but necessary considering

the chaos feared by the poem:

> What are the roots that clutch, what branches grow
> Out of this stony rubbish? Son of man,
> You cannot say, or guess, for you know only
> A heap of broken images.(CP 53)

These lines draw two distinct divisions between Eliot's

project and the historical avant-garde. First, the speaker

places understanding in some transcendent, apolitical realm

beyond the reach of any "son of man." Secondly, they are

openly hostile to any aesthetic practice based on chance

operations. Whereas the Surrealists designed chance-based
games which would make talent meaningless in the production
of art, Eliot here fetishizes a form of control that can
only be achieved by a god or perhaps a poet. Eliot's many
famous prejudices are telling evidence of where such
exclusionary desire can lead, so I propose (as in the case
of Pound) returning the broken images which Eliot suppressed
by performing a tarot card reading as a way of adding
prosthetic possibilities to his oeuvre. Precisely because
he would look askance at such an approach as part of a
larger set of, to use a phrase in Four Quartets, "Pastimes
and drugs, and features of the press"(198), a tarot card
reading may be the thing that can point to those suppressed
possibilities.

One of the most simple tarot card readings used by
Aleister Crowley[1] involves dealing fifteen of seventy-eight
extremely varied cards[2] in sets of three. The first three
cards relate to the psychological basis of the question
proposed in advance of the shuffle, the next three relate to
the things outside of the querent's control, the middle
three articulate the central nature of the question, while

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[1]This information comes from the packet enclosed in the most
recently published version of Crowley's tarot deck.

[2]Aleister Crowley's Book of Thoth, in fact, is dedicated
solely to explicating the eclectic complexities in his tarot
deck.

the top six respectively deal with the outcome of the situation depending on whether or not the querent decides to take action. This Occult practice thus forms an appropriate counterpart to Eliot's conservative, cynical politics (see Chapter 3) by asserting that the individual does play a role in determining his or her future. Of course, I will use the cards to determine a virtual future,[3] unrealized but intimated in Eliot's corpus. Thus, I will pick The Waste Land as my starting point (where the cards make their most prominent appearance) in asking a two-part question: could Eliot have achieved more openness in both his aesthetic and political practices. Just as the cards in the tarot layout spread out from the center, my question will start in The Waste Land and move backwards and forwards throughout Eliot's work.

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[3]While this may seem like an odd or willful approach, it is not without precedent in Eliot studies. Harvey Teres goes so far as to argue for a leftist strain in Eliot's work, centering his thesis on an interpretive wild card: "No text, I will be implicitly arguing, contains its own determinate ideological identity; it contains only dispositions, which are either developed or altered according to the desires and interests of contingent readers"(130). The conflict between a text having a "disposition" and also being "contingent" remains unresolved in Teres' essay, and tends to shift according to his needs, yet it is also true that those two terms can behave like variables in the proverbial quadratic equation. Furthermore, one might note a similarity between Teres' approach and Perelman's description of The Cantos as a series of unfinished pathways (as discussed in chapter 4).

Eliot's Reading

1. Psychological Basis:

   Queen of Cups(A); Six of Cups(A); The Universe(A)

2. Elements Outside of Eliot's Control

   Adjustment(A); Princess of Wands(A); The Devil

3. Central Nature of the Issue

   Queen of Wands(A); Four of Wands(A); Seven of Wands

4. If No Action Taken

   Prince of Swords(A); Prince of Wands; The Hermit

5. Action Taken

   Five of Wands; The Emperor; Eight of Swords(A)

Basis of the Question

The cards relating to the psychological basis of the
question present a poetic, dreamy woman of tranquil demeanor
combined with psychological fulfillment and well being.
Drawing the Universe card suggests that this section of the
layout provides the essence of the question. Forming a
rather stark disjunction with this section are the aspects
of the situation that can't be changed. A fascination with
justice, balance, and adjustment, perhaps initiated by
Eliot's "early training in self denial"(Gordon 14), stands
against psychological well being. The dreamer is paired
against a daring, brilliant, and individualistic woman.
Finally, the Universe faces the Devil, an irresistably

strong and unscrupulous person of blind impulse. The
conflict might lie between Eliot's ideal and real worlds.

One first finds this tension at the party Eliot takes
his readers to in "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock,"
where "the women come and go / Talking of Michelangelo"(CP
3). While many critics have tended dismiss the remark as a
condescending one, it is also possible to read this line in
an indifferent, awe-inspired, or fearful tone. By bringing
the possibility of two types of women into the picture, one
may note how the immensity of Michelangelo's works contrasts
Prufrock's own sense of smallness. These women become
playful bearers of the unapproachable figures that litter
the poem: John the Baptist, Hamlet, Lazarus. Their arms,
"braceleted and white and bare / (But in the lamplight,
downed with light brown hair!)"(5), stand as monuments
against Prufrock who sprawls like a bug on a pin or gets
lost "Among the porcelain"(6). One is in fact reminded of
Sylvia Plath's "The Colossus" where she sits "in the
cornucopia / Of your left ear"(129), a poem which alludes to
her own problems with gender relations. The parallels
between this poem and "Prufrock" are striking, turning both
speakers into tiny insects who end their poems in waiting at
the sea shore. Ultimately, the two poems form part of a
constellation which reminds us of the complex roles

individual psychologies[4] will play with respect to sociopolitical views and actions. When Freud showed the world projections, reversals, and displacements in Houdini fashion, he implicitly suggested the fine line between seeing your father as a Nazi (Plath) and sympathizing with fascism (Eliot, Pound, and Yeats). Still, Eliot's poem is a "Love Song," and one cannot discount the use of women as Prufrock's horrifying standard of measure. The passive, poetic woman of my tarot reading's psychological basis does make an appearance here (Queen of Cups) in "the mermaids singing, each to each"(7) but only to disappear. The arms of active women are more lasting here, making them objects of fear to Prufrock and a symbolic affront to modernist control in general. This erasure of traditional femininity is thus appropriately demonstrated in Salvador Dali's version[5] of the Queen of Cups, represented by a woman

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[4]Which, as I noted in chapter 3 (via Jameson), Sartre first pointed out as fruitful, yet largely unexplored territory for Marxist analysis.

[5]Dali's tarot deck, commissioned in 1974, forms an interesting postmodern counterpoint to Crowley's modernist deck (1939-45), especially in its seemingly more arbitrary choices of symbolism. From time to time I hope to bring in elements of Dali's illustrations, both in this chapter and the next, to complicate or even interrupt my readings of Eliot and Yeats. I also hope that the use of Dali's deck further emphasizes my use of the tarot cards as a rhetorical, Surrealist methodology rather than in any allegiance to the more orthodox, credulous uses that the cards have traditionally been subjected to. In that sense, I do side more with Eliot's use of the cards in The Waste

covered in seashell armor who sports a mustache and, as if defaced by Marcel Duchamp, a goatee.

The fear of the worldly woman also appears in Dali's painting for the Universe card, which is designated by its other common alternative, "The World." It depicts three Renaissance-style nudes (another version of the mermaids) chained at the necks to a bloody face in a black frame/ window. This constellation seems to embody Prufrock's/ Eliot's sense that a worldly woman is only a traditional one chained to the frightening outside. And yet Eliot's fear of the window in "Prufrock" is, technically, gender-neutral:

> It is impossible to say just what I mean!
> But as if a magic lantern threw the nerves in patterns on a screen:
> If one, settling a pillow or throwing off a shawl,
> And turning toward the window, should say:
>   "That is not it at all,
>   That is not what I meant at all." (CP 6-7)

Here, turning toward the window represents a breaking of the completed message where a speaker's intentionality is received and responded to in a similar register. Breaking this loop does represent the turning toward an entire world of possibilities, but this turn is also an agoraphobe's nightmare. The "big world out there" makes the entomoid Prufrock feel even smaller. He prefers the complete exchange, the ability to say just what he means. In these

Land, even if I do allow for more contingency in my particular misreading.

lines, however, desire for complete understanding is revealed to be a form of agoraphobia.

Interestingly, agoraphobia can often result in linguistic symptoms. Thus, it can be not only a fear of open public spaces, but of open-ended language, the spaces between words, letters, signifiers, referents. Yet these are not mutually exclusive interpretations, for agoraphobes have been shown to express fear not only towards the outside world per se, but everything associated with it as well: transportation, crowds, reminders of crowds. And of course, language itself stands as the most basic referent of social intercourse. Thus, when Stephen Dedalus travels with his father to watch his property be auctioned in A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man, his quite understandable anxiety expresses itself in terms of an inability to read: "His very brain was sick and powerless. He could scarcely interpret the letters of the signboards of the shops"(Joyce 89). Lost in a town that represents only his father's faded glory and present penury, Stephen begins to find his surroundings completely illegible. If blurring signs form the waking nightmare of Stephen Dedalus, then a magic lantern stands in for the ever-present utopia of J. Alfred Prufrock. For the magic lantern that throws nerves on the screen merely combines two already existing technologies, the Magic Lantern and the X-ray. The Magic Lantern, developed at the

turn of the 19th century, projected shadows on a screen/wall through the use of cut-outs and candles. Because of the darkness required for Magic Lantern shows, common early subjects included "skeletons, ghosts, and devils"(Christie 111). The X-ray, discovered by Wilhelm Röentgen in 1895, quickly developed into a popular entertainment for the masses. As Ian Christie notes of the shows, the "erotic implications were immediately obvious: X-rays could 'see through' clothes to reveal a bizarre form of nakedness" (114). One can see how these two technologies would appear frightening to Prufrock. Despite his stated desires, the "magic lantern of the nerves" is more a possibility to be avoided at all costs than an unrealizable utopia. The utter exposure such technology could provide would be unacceptable to someone suffering from communicative agoraphobia, even if the exposure was ultimately ambiguous, false, or bizarre.

Thus, even a critical essay such as "Tradition and the Individual Talent"(1919) can be read as a sort of cosmopolitan agoraphobia. The poet, says Eliot, must be "judged, not amputated" by the past(29). It would be difficult to argue here that the word "not" is more powerful than Eliot's choice of the word "amputated." As in "Prufrock," we have a fear that the subject will be cut down to an uncomfortably insignificant size. In order for the artist to avoid being cut down, he must create a work of art

so powerful that "the whole existing order must be, if ever so slightly, altered"(29). And yet, even this triumph cannot occur without violence to the individual: "The progress of an artist is continual self-sacrifice, a continual extinction of personality"(30). No matter how much one tries to explain what Eliot really means in this pithy essay, the agonistic, violent relationship between the individual and the world at large cannot be erased. The will to control the historical order, either by writing timeless poems or delineating the order in essay form, inevitably expresses itself (for Eliot) in agorophobic tones. The ramifications of such agoraphobia will eventually express themselves in such controversial works as After Strange Gods(1933) with its infamous comments about "freethinking Jews" who frighten Eliot so much for their associations with both intellectual and geographical diaspora.

And yet, such ambivalent feelings also coincide in Eliot's ambivalent relationships (both private and public) with various women he came into contact with. Eliot was at first attracted to his wife Vivienne, for instance, and her "emphatic, unashamed nature." These same qualities, however, would later come to "torment" him(Gordon 115). Eliot also gave pyrrhic support of women writers through reviews and publishing. Usually this support consisted of

talking about a poet like Marianne Moore in ways that minimized her status, for instance by discussing her as a specifically woman or feminist writer. Eliot even went so far as to write to his father in 1917, "I struggle to keep the writing as much as possible in Male hands, as I distrust the Feminine in literature"(108). By appropriating these writers to his own ends, Eliot behaves like the serpent streaming from the eye of Crowley's "Universe" card, wrapping a floating woman in a strangling embrace.

In "Portrait of a Lady," Eliot exchanges appropriation for insult. Specifically, the speaker undercuts the woman's conversation via references that suggest her speech is a form of mechanized cliché: "Admire the monuments, / Discuss the late events, / Correct our watches by the public clocks"(CP 9). Yet one wonders how willful such critique may be, especially considering the mean-spirited epigraph to the poem: "Thou has committed- / Fornication: but that was in another country, / And besides, the wench is dead"(CP 8). This passage from The Jew of Malta brings one to a question of how to read Eliot's politics in his poetry. While Anthony Julius rightly insists that it is a mistake to blindly place Jews and women in one category of "Other"(24), moments like this one pull in two directions at once, for here Eliot himself has conflated the two groups. So, while historical specificity is always to be desired, especially

when it comes to the causes of suffering, to suggest that similar thought structures may not be applied to different groups is not only psychologically inaccurate but socially inefficient. One must not only seek out individual acts of hatred but also understand the conspiracies that connect them. Thus, as I suggested in Chapter 4 with respect to the poetry of Ezra Pound, reading these poets with an eye to such defense mechanisms as condensation, displacement, and denial may prove more fruitful than allowing them total mastery over their work. In many ways, Eliot could not only be regarded as one of the "'art or literature machines'" that Pound "oiled for the sake of their potential output" (Gordon 99), but even partially as a mechanical gramophone for the typical prejudices (both misogynist and anti-Semitic) of his day. And if we take the speaker in the poem seriously, "Portrait of a Lady" is about missed congruities and equivalences of all sorts: "For everybody said so, all our friends, / They were all sure our feelings would relate / So closely!"(CP 11).

The coincidence of misogyny and anti-Semitism also comes up in the poem "Burbank with a Baedeker: Bleistein with a Cigar" which presents a woman who is definitely daring and active. In rapid succession, she "entertains" the Gentile Burbank and the Jewish Klein. This parallelism not only suggests the wide range of her tastes, but also

their degraded nature, for this poem makes no secret of its opinion towards Jews: "The rats are underneath the piles. / The Jew is underneath the lot. / Money in furs"(CP 33). The parallelism of this stanza further confirms that Eliot thinks in terms of equivalencies, as does the parallelism of various Jews within the poem. Sir Ferdinand Klein (and all the pretentiousness in that name) was previously Bleistein who "Stares from the protozoic slime / At a perspective of Canaletto." If anything, the bleeding from this Jew into the royal one suggests a fear of cultural and economic assimilation even as Volupine's barge alludes to the rootless quality of multinational trade. Consequently, it is misleading to characterize "Eliot's Jew" as prey and not predator, as Anthony Julius does(18), in order to separate his anti-Semitism from his misogyny. In this poem, the comic portrayal of Bleistein with "A saggy bending of the knees / And elbows, with the palms turned out"(CP 32) uses humour as a defense mechanism designed to shake off the fear of Jews who can shapeshift, are everywhere ("Chicago Semite Viennese"), and invisible ("Money in furs" with its lack of a definite verb or actor). Eliot's depiction of Jews here continues a pattern begun with women in "Prufrock": self-identified inadequacy leading to the inevitable creation of a monster (under the bed or under the lot) which can play the tangible cause of a mysterious inadequacy.

In a larger context, the very invisibility of assimilated Jews made them even more susceptible to irrational projection in Nazi Germany. In the 1930s, less than one half of one percent of Germans were Jewish, and most of those were almost fully assimilated into the dominant culture. This made them more effective targets of economic anxiety precisely because their lack of visibility was conducive to the metaphors of infiltration and disease that conspiratorial rhetoric works with. One is reminded, in Eco's _Serendipities_, of the Knights of the Templar whose "silent disappearance will fuel the legend of the order's underground survival"(86). Eliot's parallelism of rats (as hidden carriers of disease) and Jews is complicit with this sort of rhetoric inasmuch as it insists, like Hitler in _Mein Kampf_, that the "life of nations, races, cultures and continents. . . is governed by the same laws of health and sickness as those governing the life of individuals"(Stern 40). The fear of assimilation worked in reverse for the Templars, whose dissolution involved allegations of their sympathy with Moslems (their exposure literally caused them to speak the Moslems' language). Yet the two fears are as similar in nature as they are persistent. These metaphors also came together in the American anti-Semitism of the 1950s Rosenberg and HUAC trials (also the height of Eliot's worldwide popularity) where the invisibility of Communist

beliefs aligned with a distrust of American Jewish assimilation. Thus, whether it involves "ratting" your coworker out or forcing someone to wear a Jewish badge, the artificial process of "making visible" becomes the first line of defense against the erasures of assimilation. The "outed" Jew can truly address those who have read his guilt in his very invisibility, as Eco phrases it in <u>Foucault's Pendulum</u>, "Toi, apocryphe lecteur, mon semblable, mon frère"(Eco 169).

When "Rachel née Rabinovitch / Tears at the grapes with murderous paws"(49) then, the bestiality in the depiction must be read more seriously than one might otherwise think, for Rachel was born with a Jewish surname only to have changed it or be on the verge of changing it. The detail makes it seem as if Jews are born with the goal of marrying into the mainstream, born in a state of process. "Sweeney Among the Nightingales" is in fact structured around the concept of dark significance lurking just below apparent insignificance or innocence. "Apeneck Sweeney" may be at a gathering with the "person in the Spanish cape. . . [who] Slips and pulls the table cloth / Overturns a coffee-cup," but this woman is "thought to be in league" with Rachel, a phrase that resonates with Jewish economic conspiracy. Furthermore, this scene tracks outward to the more mythic significance of Agamemnon's murder by his wife and her

lover. The nightingales in the title suggest the rape of Philomel even as they parallel the two women who vaguely threaten to punish Sweeney for crimes committed by previous generations. This misogynist revision of the myth tends to align the mere presence of the women with punishment,[6] and at least one of those women is a Jew in disguise.

"Gerontion" also condenses these fears/hatreds. The right hand side of the Tarot reading would be represented by "the Jew [who] squats on the window sill, the owner, / Spawned in some estaminet of Antwerp, / Blistered in Brussels, patched and peeled in London"(CP 29), due to the unchangeable nature of his ownership (at least as far as the speaker of the poem is concerned). As for Gerontion, he is "an old man in a dry month" who is more interested in describing the way things are than in changing them. As the poem's speaker, he reads the Jew in terms of the Devil card --unscrupulous as much in his origins as in his practices. A word like "Spawned" makes the Jew rat or froglike while the verbs "patched and peeled" make him more of a machine than a man. This ambiguity is captured in Aleister Crowley's drawing of the Devil card, which depicts a goat

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[6] One might note that Sweeney makes his escape only to reappear "Outside the window, leaning in"(50), as if all he desires is to be, considering the agoraphobia in Eliot's earlier poetry, in another room. This position also separates the women as objects of study, the window being a metonym for "observation."

standing before a tree-sized phallus. Standing in for the testicles, however, is a pair of cells having just undergone mitosis, each containing four humanoid figures trapped inside. These two "test cells" look out towards the contemporary (1930s and 40s) science of eugenics as practiced by all industrialized countries in one form or another and forward to more advanced forms of genetic engineering, including "posthuman" cyborgs. Inasmuch as the "wandering Jew" of the poem embodies these latter developments(remembering that for Crowley the Devil was a positive force), these effacements of permanent biological identity, he represents an improvement upon the aging body of Gerontion. Gerontion draws the Devil card in order to denigrate the Jew, but in a Nietzschean (and Crowleyian) revaluation of values, this card becomes a symbol of unlimited possibility. The thing that cannot be changed, in this case, is adaptability. Gerontion despises the mobility the Jew represents within the poem for many of the same reasons the assimilative powers of Jews were feared in both Europe and America.

Despite the mercurial nature of the Jew in the poem, Gerontion seems to know everything about him, thus bringing the speaker into line with the Adjustment card and its implications of being fixated with justice and measurement. This precision, as in the Pisan Cantos, produces rigidity at

the price of accuracy. Since the poem begins with the speaker telling about all the places and events he was absent from, this mapping of the Jew's past sounds more like a bluff as well, an attempt to "make visible" the irritating erasure of the contemporary European Jew. Following Dali's version of the Devil card, however, mercurial identity and gender ambiguity go hand in hand to make the opposition between visibility/invisibility impossible to realize. The hermaphrodite devil is drawn in such a way as to represent shadows, yet the shadows he/she casts are the same color as the flesh. When the negative associations with shape-shifting are removed, the Jew's slithering, amphibious quality cuts rivers through the concept of empire that, as David Roessel and others note, Eliot valued so highly. But the speaker not only claims to know too much about this Jew's past, but about the processes of history at large: "History has many cunning passages, contrived corridors / And issues, deceives with whispering ambitions"(CP 30). In these lines Eliot depicts history as a spatial entity, and in the next line we find out that it is a woman who, like a fearful combination of the two cards in the layout, is both creative and manipulative. Like the Jew, she possesses a fragmenting yet conspiratorial power over Europe.

If women and Jews take on monolithic proportions (they represent Gerontion's jaded view of history) in this poem,

this representation corresponds to the helplessness of the speaker. He is not only an old man who feels he has been taken advantage of by these figures, but a poetic embodiment of the cliché that compares Europe to an old man. This "old man driven by the Trades / To a sleepy corner" (CP 31) has been buffeted by the winds of commerce and can only complain. This fate is relatively calm, however, compared to those "whirled / Beyond the circuit of the shuddering Bear [another market reference] / In fractured atoms." This fear in the face of an unpredictable world economy has found a relatively harmless voice within the old man of the poem but an extremely influential one in Eliot. It stands within a more general desire to imprison what can't be controlled, as in "Rhapsody on a Windy Night" where the "Whispering lunar incantations / Dissolve the floors of memory / And all its clear relations, / Its divisions and precisions" (CP 16). Once again, precision is valued over accuracy, but in this case it is also opposed to the female principle of "lunar incantions." Reading Eliot's poems of *flanerie*, it is important to note his transitions, the turns he makes when confronted by something he deems monstrous. For when Eliot has found himself confronted with what he deems an unpredictable female principle, the phallic "street-lamp said, 'Regard that woman / Who hesitates toward you in the

light of the door,'" a comfortably precise division of woman
(as prostitute) into economic and sexual categories. This
rhetoric of the imprisoning last word may be momentarily
impotent when coming from the mouth of a Burbank who has
been sexually displaced by another man, but it leaves
structures of resentment in place which can take virulent
forms in more powerful hands, for Eliot was writing these
poems when he was still under the sway of a Pound who
"announced that artists were the dictators of the future"
(Gordon 100).

One has to go to the minor poems to find any escape
from Eliot's nightmarish constructions of independent women
and Jews. Here and there one finds fond allusions to Cousin
Nancy who "danced all the modern dances" or a servant living
it up after her master dies, but their relegation to minor
verse is a telling marginality. Sadly, one has to go
through an even more oblique angle to find a hint of guilt:
in "Preludes," the use of the second person to watch "the
night revealing / The thousand sordid images / Of which your
soul was constituted"(14). Eliot's use of different points
of view and personas throughout these poems allows many
unsavory opinions to be passed around as hearsay, ironically
granting them even more authority and immunity for the poet
who merely records what he sees and hears. Perhaps Eliot
could say with self-deceiving honesty that he was no anti-

Semite, especially when signing a petition against Soviet anti-Semitism, because Eliot in some cases used the same xenophobic logic as the newspapers he pretended to despise (as we all do)--horrible things only happen to strangers in strange lands.

The Center Cards

The Four of Wands implies perfected work, settlement, and completion, ironically reinforced by the winter which "kept us warm, covering / Earth in forgetful snow, feeding / A little life with dried tubers"(CP 53). This opening to *The Waste Land* posits a thesis that completed things can only be small in scope and negative in connotation. Otherwise, an atmosphere of irritation dominates by presenting fragments that suggest an unattainable whole: "And the dead tree gives no shelter, the cricket no relief, / And the dry stone no sound of water"(53). The tree reminds one of shade and Christ, the cricket evokes music, and the stone is one fragment of a well or river. This card corresponds to the desire for coverage explored in Chapter 3, a desire whose subversion forms the central crisis of this poem. As I have suggested in Chapter 3 as well, and as Kenneth Asher argues in <u>T.S. Eliot and Ideology</u>(162), this formal quality in Eliot's poetry has analogous structures not only in his other writings, but in his politics. From a

materialist perspective, the totalizing impulse to map these affinities must proceed despite the imperfections residing in theories of the relationships between art and ideology.

The frustrated sense of control ironically reappears in the Madame Sosostris section(CP 54), since knowledge of the future makes time a map-able spatial construction that would put an end to speculation. Sosostris' reputation as "the wisest woman in Europe" encourages a political reading of this control. Even with her credentials, however, there are still blank cards she is "forbidden to see." This lack of vision may correspond to the fact that she "had a bad cold," a return of repressed materiality which would place her in an uncertain relation to the Queen of Wands, a woman of adaptability, persistent energy, and calm authority. Not only is she sick and partially blind, but paranoid as well, nervously telling the reader to remind Mrs. Equitone, "I bring the horoscope myself: / One must be so careful these days."

One wonders, however, if Madame Sosostris wouldn't benefit from having her horoscope stolen or riddled with misinformation. As Thomas Kuhn reminds us in The Structure of Scientific Revolutions, new theories often come about in response to crisis(75). In this sense, a crisis behaves in a manner analogous to the interruptions encouraged by various automatic procedures. Inasmuch as Sosostris or

Eliot resists such interrupting crises, they operate within rules resembling scientific paradigms which supply puzzles/ experiments that hint at predetermined solutions(179). While Kuhn emphasizes how inefficient retooling scientific paradigms can be(76), one wonders to what extent this inefficiency may differ between the theoretical and the applied sciences, not to mention other fields such as the humanities which purport to exist for the purpose of changing consciousness. Or for Sosostris, a crisis might counteract the tendency to see the same thing even when anomalies arise, a tendency proven in experiments that demonstrate generalizable cognitive failures to register subtle changes in packs of playing cards(Kuhn 63). All of these things are important not only for Sosostris, but for Eliot, whose psychiatrist developed the theory of overcoming "what he termed clichés, the painful thoughts in which a diseased mind had become imprisoned"(Gordon 172).

Consequently, Sosostris' cold may be read more literally as an ailment of blocked passages limiting the number of routes the poem can take. As I discussed in Chapter 3, Eliot's elimination of chance by choosing the cards rather than drawing them randomly from an actual deck makes the Sosostris section work more like an overture to an opera than the "art of interruption" Ulmer locates in the historical avant-garde and celebrates in "The Object of

Post-Criticism"(127). Perhaps the arranged images on the cards correspond to Sosostris' blocked *passages* while the blank one she is not permitted to see suggests an unrealized relinquishing of control.

This call for interruption applies to Eliot's readers as well, who are his doubles: "hypocrite lecteur!--mon semblable,--mon frère"(CP 55). Perhaps the reader is a hypocrite because he pretends not to be a writer, thus denying the responsibility corresponding to a writerly (as opposed to the readerly) text. As Roland Barthes describes in *S/Z*, the readerly text asserts the "principle of non-contradiction. . . by stressing at every opportunity the *compatible* nature of circumstances, by attaching narrated events together with a kind of logical 'paste'"(156) while the writerly text does not offer the same sealant that allows the reader to passively follow the unitary logic within the work itself. He or she must in effect not "complete" a text, but add supplements to its incompleteness. The writerly text does not provide pleasure, which is limited, but instead approaches uncontainable bliss: "you can not speak 'on' such a text, you can only speak 'in' it"(The Pleasure of the Text 22). In calling out to the hypocrite reader who flows lifelessly across London Bridge and plants corpses to wait and see if

they'll sprout, Eliot invites *The Waste Land* to be read as a text of bliss. Or as Paul Morrison puts it, there is no reason to assume that every reader of the poem can't be as writerly as Ezra Pound who questioned, rearranged, and deleted large sections of the poem(97).

If one doesn't answer the call, *The Waste Land* turns into a reified text whose readers become commodities themselves. Immediately after chastising the passive reader in the first section of the poem, Eliot presents the logical endpoint of such interpretation. "The Chair [note the capitalization] she sat in"(CP 56) immobilizes the subject of "A Game of Chess" to such an extent that her possessions take on a life of their own: "a golden Cupidon peeped out," "the glitter of her jewels rose," and "a carved dolphin swam" in utter abandon as compared to the woman's stasis. Despite the opulence of these surroundings, they seem to betray a crisis of mass production in the 20th-century: "Scientific advances in printing, lithography, and machine production permitted a world where an enormous amount of 'things' could be first produced, and then advertised, as necessary, even 'magical'"(Leonard 1). Since the woman's surroundings are hardly necessary, Eliot has emphasized their ability to appear magical to her. Eliot definitely associates passive, sensuous reception with the female

gender here, a disdain with a strong history in his poetry.
In "Whispers of Immortality" Eliot contrasts the high
seriousness of those like Webster who "knew that thought
clings round dead limbs" with Grishkin whose "friendly bust
/ Gives promise of pneumatic bliss"(CP 45). Christopher
Ricks describes Grishkin with her maisonette as another
representative of the vulgarized foreigner(262), thus making
her yet another condensation of xenophobia and misogyny. So
while certain features in Eliot's critique of commodity
culture are well put and well taken, they are "packaged" in
an unfortunate way. In "Whispers of Immortality" as well as
in *The Waste Land*, Eliot's critique of reification is
ultimately compromised by his reification of the female
gender as passive object.

Consequently, the rape of Philomel represented in this
room takes on a new significance. While Eliot presents the
materialistic, superficial women in his poems with a
documentary tone, this construction more closely mirrors the
violence and artificiality of the room's painting. The
painting itself is ambiguous; by comparing it to a window,
Eliot blurs the boundaries between art and reality,
representation and construction. There is not, however, a
balance between art and praxis. While a representation may
easily be put into practice, aestheticizing an act may have

little effect. Thus, once Philomel is changed into a nightingale, she may express herself, but only with a voice devoid of informational content. When Eliot announces, "And still she cries, and still the world pursues"(CP 56), is he aware of limitations in the forms he uses, of his own complicity with violence, or of the critiques he makes and suffers within his own verse? Since Eliot will always be awash in a sea of personas and quotations, his verse will always have a contradictory and broken quality. One should be aware, as John Xiros Cooper affirms throughout The Politics of Voice and The Ideology of the Four Quartets, of how Eliot's fragments may form trajectories into lived politics.

On one level, Eliot's work should always be read with the grain of seriousness one grants to such rhetorical forms as a suicide threat or even a good-humored insult. When the woman in "A Game of Chess" complains of her bad nerves and looks to her companion for comfort, his floating references to "rats' alley / Where the dead men lost their bones" and Shakespeare ("Those are pearls that were his eyes") exhibit a magnetism of disdain, resentment, and hinted violence toward her. The possible autobiographical component to these lines only further reinforces the connection between art and daily practice. Eliot's work at the bank to support himself, his wife, and her addictions eerily mirrors the

poetic voice that seems to resent a woman with so much time
on her hands she can only brush her hair and grow mad--even
if such learned helplessness has its own tradition in
reified gender categories.

One's desire to escape such reification is precisely
what makes the end of the poem so attractive. The time in
the desert, representative of Eliot's time in the waste
land, causes hallucinations of number and space, an
expedition with a ghostly member and a "city over the
mountains [that] / Cracks and reforms and bursts in the
violet air"(CP 67). These two images suggest the
possibility of radical individual and social change
respectively. Amidst all the desire for order in the poem,
there are moments of dadaist phrasing, almost as if Eliot
desired the ambiguity in the phrase, "Revive for a moment a
broken Coriolanus"(69). For, as Thomas Kuhn emphasizes, a
new paradigm can only arise with the destruction of an old
one, however inefficient the process may be. And, while
Michael Levenson may be largely correct in calling *The Waste
Land* "a poem that stays at home in the library"(11), the
cloudy cities in the final section present a moment where
the solidity of walls is no longer a given. I view the
Occult critique practiced in this particular chapter and
elsewhere as a small contribution to this maintenance of

open yet smoky passages. It aligns itself with the vampiric
moments in Eliot's work where the "bats with baby faces"(CP
68) crawl up and down the walls and ceiling like a city
(read contemporary culture) with towers so movable the whole
town can be rearranged and turned upside down, a city
permeable as the thunderheads that come to the jungle
crouched "in silence."

The Action Cards

The Utopian moments and paradoxical phrasings within
The Waste Land suggest that the high modernist flirtations
with avant-garde forms will always open brief conduits away
from their more conservative politics, albeit in muted or
displaced form. Furthermore, I would maintain that Eliot's
attempts to distance himself from the centrality (to his
career) of *The Waste Land* stems less from his recognition of
it as "a parody of a Poem"(Kenner 439) and more from a fear
of the radical political possibilities it contains. Eliot's
decisive action as Emperor of his own work, then, was his
attempt to minimize the importance of these elements with
respect to his oeuvre. The partial rule of *The Waste Land*
in Eliot's psyche, however, would be as long-lasting as its
effect on the canon.

So Eliot's momentary revival of "a broken Coriolanus"
in *The Waste Land* resurfaces in <u>Unfinished Poems</u> as the

truncated "Coriolan." The poem carries several ambiguous
signatures which give its authorship a broken quality. The
speaker is Coriolan, both an historical and a contemporary
figure who refers to hoof beats and machine guns(125). Of
course, Eliot himself sits somewhere in relationship to this
speaker, a throne all the more difficult to locate given
that the poem is "unfinished." The term brings up all kinds
of questions, especially those concerning whether or not one
can truly sign a poem before it is finished, or even whether
a poem is ever finished. This broken signature results in
the call at the end of the poem to "Resign Resign Resign"(CP
129). The word "resign" suggests not only a breaking away
or relinquishing, but a linguistic change in identity. This
doubleness recalls *The Waste Land*'s cities that are
destroyed and reformed in the air while also evoking the
Prince of Swords from the tarot reading who "slays as fast
as he creates" and who is "clever but unstable." This card
links instability with intelligence and thus may correspond
to a critique of traditional power structures, for the call
on Coriolan to re*sign* comes after the demand for "a
committee of investigation." Despite the bureacratic sound
of "committee," the concept of investigation combines with
the content of "Coriolan" to confirm Derrida's assertion in
Signsponge that fully utilizing all registers of the

signature can be a way of escaping institutionalized discourses(22). It is interesting to note, in fact, that Salvador Dali's Prince of Swords holds both a sword and a quill, and that experts have often been baffled by the extraordinary variety in Dali's signatures. Apparently, he signs in so many ways it is impossible to tell an authentic Dali from a fake signature. Someone not concerned with the monetary value of art might argue that there is no such thing as an "authentic" Dali signature. In "Coriolan," the speaker (and Eliot to a lesser extent) also flirts with inauthentic possibilities of the signature. And yet the Prince of Swords is a threat to Eliot's sensibilities in the card's very avant-garde alignments, for though collage can be defined innocently as the art of interruption(rather than effacement or destruction), the Prince remains Satanic in the Eliotic sense. Just as the Prince of Swords diabolically creates through destruction, the French Revolution (according to Eliot and the French right) was Satanic in its break with divine historical progress(Asher 14). This break was literalized in the change of the French calendar to reflect the new era, and it is no surprise that the art of interruption is counterattacked by Charles Maurras' call for the Right to unify under the sign of classicism(Asher 23) or in Eliot's retreat from the

"nightmare" of *The Waste Land* to the "utopia" of *The Four Quartets*.

While the signature, particularly in Derrida's reading, truly plays with the frames of language and the object of study, Coriolan may break away from his role to become, paradoxically, an engaged hermit. Dali emphasizes the rebirth adhering to the hermit's signature by giving him an amniotic lantern illuminated by a human fetus. This sort of hermeticism involves a retreat from the values of culture in order to undermine them from another angle. In the "Difficulties of a Statesman" section of the poem, superficial political engagement reveals itself as a layering of committees that never attain any real achievement: "A committee has been appointed to nominate a commission of engineers / To consider the Water Supply"(CP 127). Meaningless event succeeds pointless event until "the guards shake dice on the marches"(CP 128). While John Xiros Cooper associates these soldiers with hopelessness(Ideology 69), their dice tumble against the regularity of the marches and committees in an anti-systematic manner suggesting Eliot's Satanic desire for the avant-garde's revolutionary potential.

Immediately after this invocation of chance, Coriolan calls to his mother, a fact that should not be taken lightly

given the misogyny in much of Eliot's poetry. Not only does
Coriolan long to be "some time, almost now, together"(CP
128), suggesting the possibility of positive connection
between genders, but he does so in the form of apostrophe to
a mother who is either absent or dead. While this plea may
be regarded as a safe form of communication that doesn't
threaten his ideals precisely because she can't answer back,
Coriolan's imagination of his mother as audience may in
itself expand the roles he can play. The (always limited)
political benefits of speaking to or through the dead or
absent will be discussed in the final chapter, but suffice
it to say generally that much of Eliot's more hateful poetry
might never have been written if he had imagined the sort of
audiences he alienated or if he had thought of actual
friends he lost (Julius 1) after publication of the anti-
Semitic After Strange Gods.

Coriolan's desire to be "Hidden in the stillness of
noon, in the silent croaking of the night"(CP 128), while it
certainly bears suicidal resonance, must ultimately be
contrasted to the more simple Hermit card drawn alongside
the Prince of Wands. To follow Dali's sight gag (a crowned
frog) for this latter card, the "silent croaking" might give
birth to a sea of princes who counteract the fascist ideal
of a leader like Coriolan (or Malatesta). By way of
contrast, the traditional Hermit merely suggests "retirement

from participation in current events," a diagnosis which corresponds to a politically dangerous impulse in Eliot's work. At many points in his career, Eliot expressed a sense of utter futility in political commitment(Craig 278). Specifically, Eliot betrays a lack of faith in collective action. In "The Hollow Men," Eliot describes directionless subjects "Leaning together / Headpiece filled with straw"(CP 79). How different is this dummy's head of 1925 with respect to Breton's Surrealist Manifesto of the year before with its call for a collective and socialist (1929) exploration of the hidden forces of the mind. Eliot's use of the first person in the second section of his poem suggests another move from collectivity, especially when he decides to wear "deliberate disguises"(80). One could read "The Hollow Men" as a social critique written by a persona, but the fact remains that Eliot (who perhaps taught us that subjectivity is little more than a deck of personas) used make-up in the 1930s to "appear more cadaverous than ever"(Ross 51). That's right, Eliot was a Goth. This sort of ostentatious death-in-life seldom stirred to political engagement, and if it did, tended to view religion as the only answer to the dangerous machinations of fascism (Morrison 65). At best, this answer was a passive one, echoed eerily in the static refrain of "Ash Wednesday," "I do not hope to turn again."

At worst, Eliot's reliance on religion prevents him from seeing Christianity's own complicity with violent tactics and anti-Semitism. While "Ash Wednesday" fantasizes conversion to Christianity as a form of dismemberment, Eliot's _Ariel_ poems of the same era echo the metonymic colonialism of Shakespeare's _The Tempest_. "Journey of the Magi," for instance, equates the birth of Christ with the death of the Magi. Likewise, "A Song for Simeon" parallels Roman occupation with the birth of Christ which makes Simeon look forward inevitably to "the time of cords and scourges and lamentation"(CP 101). A member of the eclipsed Jewish religion and about to die, Simeon talks of "thy salvation" (CP 102), not his own. When Eliot does directly confront Christian violence in _The Rock_, he specifically equates it with a degraded form of belief. The colonial impulse of the Crusades transforms into the less specific "imperial expansion" that arose when "your fathers fixed the place of God"(CP 153). But later in the sequence, Eliot embodies the two cards relating to warfare and strife when he presents an either/or logic of the temple of God: "There are those who would build the Temple, / And those who prefer that the Temple should not be built"(158). Assuming the inherent rightness of his position, Eliot unabashedly sides with those who build with "the sword in one hand and the trowel in the other," conveniently blurring attack and self-

defense. One senses here a more subtle formulation of
Walter Benjamin's most famous equation, fascism as the
aestheticization of political violence. Thus, Dali's
depiction of strife as soldiers buried in giant butterflies
might be a better image for this collusion. Of course, the
conflation of aggression and self-defense was also used in
Nazi Germany where Jews were described as a scourge or
infection to be eradicated for the salvation of "true
Germans." So when Lyndall Gordon describes Eliot's
inability to empathize with suffering outside his
experience, she in actuality alludes to a history of
institutional blindness which may have made the horrors of
escalating fascism so invisible to much of Europe and
America. All in all, Eliot's comment in The Idea of a
Christian Society (1939), "If you will not have God (and He
is a jealous God) you should pay your respects to Hitler or
Stalin"(qtd. in Asher 88) sounds less like an opposition and
more like a substitution.

     In contrast to the hermeticism which veils its violence
under a seeming retreat from world interest, "Coriolan"
alienates its reader into a new form of engagement. Here
Eliot does not embalm himself for the public, but presents a
Coriolan who seems fed up with the artificiality and
repetition of "the row of family portraits, dingy busts, all
looking / remarkably Roman / Remarkably like each other"(CP

128). In the previous section entitled "Triumphal March," we see how this artifice comes together to disorient: "We hardly knew ourselves that day, or knew the City"(CP 125). By mentioning the number of "machine guns, trench mortars . . . projectiles, mines and fuses" that accompany Coriolan, Eliot forces a connection between the poem and the European leaders, including Hitler and Mussolini, attempting mass seductions. Along with Coriolan and his future doubles, however, come golf club Captains, Scouts, and Liverymen. The violence of fascism begins slowly and permeates mundane cultural practices before it takes the form of Yeats' "rough beast." This is one of the reasons that Nazism was able to rally around anti-Semitism, which had such a tradition in Europe that it was, in addition to being sinister, both mundane and ubiquitous. And this is precisely why one can not look at Eliot's "British" anti-Semitism, to use Julius' phrase, with too much scorn or too much forgiveness. Fascism, like the Fordist capitalism it literalized and extended in previously unforeseen ways, was able to appropriate almost any sentiment or technology for its purposes, could even be "hidden under the dove's wing"(CP 126).

Consequently, the "dark dove with the flickering tongue"(CP 203) in "Little Gidding" is the most telling and ambiguous admission of guilt in The Four Quartets. It

represents peace and war, a hopeful candle and deceptive
serpent, and most importantly, Eliot's sense of self-
deception in his own actions. As in "Preludes," however,
Eliot displaces his own sense of guilt onto another, this
time onto a "compound ghost" who laments "things ill done
and done to others' harm / Which once you took for exercise
of virtue"(CP 204). The ghost, interestingly enough,
displaces its own guilt back onto Eliot with the second
person, almost as if Eliot wishes to create a wilderness of
mirrors that will reduce the glare of shame. For the dove's
part, after its flame takes on Pentecostal meanings of
saving-destruction, it is finally redeemed when "the tongues
of flame are in-folded / Into the crowned knot of fire"(CP
209). Coriolanus' broken crown has finally been repaired,
but perhaps at the price of proper accountability. The Four
Quartets present Eliot's best face, the one that not only
earned him a Nobel Prize but also completed the unfinished
"Coriolan" as he intended, with "a state of mystical
elevation"(Gordon 246). Unfortunately, the crowned knot of
fire is a narrow, aestheticized aperture without history and
without views of Eliot's more unsavory profiles. Perhaps if
Eliot took as truthful a look at his political influence and
legacy as Coriolan takes of his, The Four Quartets would
have been a better, uglier poem without prizes. But in the
suffocating, nightmarish continuities of WWII and the Cold

War, Eliot and his followers wanted a different kind of utopia.

CHAPTER 6
REVISIONING THE ROUGH BEAST

Introduction

Due to its implicit acknowledgment of personal action,
I have also used Aleister Crowley's tarot to counteract the
religious paralysis in William Butler Yeats' vision. The
very nature of a Vision, an intimation of what the gods have
ordained, tends to preclude the possibility of revision. As
outlandish as Yeats' religious views may have been, however,
their end results were no different than much of Europe's
reaction to the rise of fascism--passive denial.
Tragically, Yeats and the rest of conservative Europe tended
to view history as an inevitable march beyond the powers of
human intervention. Yet, casting indignant cards at the
"rough beast" of history, one might look for a way out of
the paralyzed spectatorship implicit in Yeats' work. Or one
might ask, can we grow Yeats a left hand to revise his
Vision?

I hope it will not seem too strange that some essence
of Crowley permeates much of this dissertation, however foul
smelling that essence might be, for he is the modernist
counterpart of the tarot cards mentioned in *The Waste Land*.

His personality and reputation make him, rather, just strange enough, ideally suited to act as an image complex for a subversive, yet popular politics.[1] It is no coincidence that John Lennon, who at one point was dangerous enough that Nixon tried to deport him, nominated Crowley to appear on the cover of the Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band album cover. His presence on the album, which was released in 1967, helped the Occultist obtain a large, posthumous cult following. Crowley's Confessions were a best seller by 1971, a phenomenon "partly attributed by its latterday editor John Symonds to the fact that 'those gifted young men, the Beatles, have added him to their escutcheon'" (Hutchinson 12).

Crowley even has a hand in my reading of Pound in Chapter 4. Though I refer mainly to John Cage's use of the I-Ching in drawing parallels with Pound's imprisonment, Crowley is also a famous user of the divination method. Apparently, the I-Ching helped Crowley choose Cefalù, Sicily as the site for his infamous Abbey of Thelema. After one of Crowley's acolytes died of gastroenteritis, reputedly from

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[1]See chapter 2 for my discussion on Greg Ulmer's use of biography, particularly in Heuretics, as a means for generating ideas about a particular topic of study. In Ulmer's method, revealing facts about an individual still serve an informational purpose, but the particular individual takes on a more allegorical inflection than the model of literary realism practiced in traditional biographies.

drinking cat's blood, Crowley was skinned alive by the British Press. Donning his newly acquired title as "THE WICKEDEST MAN IN THE WORLD," Crowley left Italy at the command of Mussolini himself, who was at the time (1922) engaged in a "crusade against secret and quasi-mystical societies"(185). Not only was Mussolini the model "artifex" for Pound, but Yeats tells of Pound's special fondness for Italian cats in his mystical masterpiece A Vision:

> Sometimes about ten o'clock at night I accompany [Pound] to a street where there are hotels upon one side, upon the other palm-trees and the sea, and there, taking out of his pocket bones and pieces of meat, he begins to call the cats. He knows all their histories. . . . Yet now that I recall the scene I think that he has no affection for cats. . . I cannot imagine him with a cat of his own.(5-6)

Yeats' conclusion that Pound does not love cats is a strange one given the evidence, and a disheartening one too, for the image of Pound saving food for the strays he knows by their names (of his own christening) may be one of the most tender images the world will ever get to see of Pound. And if Pound has a weakness for both Mussolini and cats, then Crowley's affairs at Thelema could put Pound in a vulnerable position. One recalls the stories of an Egyptian assault rebuffed when the besieged began catapulting cats over their walls, as well as the 18th-century cat massacre designed to

horrify the master of a print shop.[2] If the print journeymen crucified and hung cats in order to symbolically threaten the oppressive structures of the print industry, perhaps a ritual ingestion of cat's blood by Pound (or the rhetorical/symbolic equivalent) could have changed the oppressive structures of his print.

But William Butler Yeats is the only one of these poets to actually encounter Crowley face to face. Within the Golden Dawn, there lurked a perturbing presence known as Perdurabo, a.k.a. Aleister Crowley, whom "Yeats in particular took a strong dislike to"(Coote 205). As fate and Crowley would have it, dissension within the Golden Dawn brought the always theatrical Crowley to the Vault of the Adepti, ready to stage a coup. Crowley wore "Highland dress, a black mask over his face, and a plaid thrown over his head and shoulders, an enormous gold or gilt cross on his breast, and a dagger at his side"(qtd. in Hutchinson 71), yet neither the costume nor the weaponry was enough to frighten Yeats, who was waiting for Crowley. Accounts vary as to what exactly happened next, but the most interesting one has Crowley being physically thrown out by Yeats and his associate. Still, this expulsion was not the end of the matter, for one could argue that Crowley placed quite a

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[2]Robert Dartin, <u>The Great Cat Massacre and Other Episodes in French Cultural History</u>, 1984.

stain on Yeats' psyche. After failing to enter the Vault by force, Crowley and MacGregor Mathers sued for control of the Golden Dawn. In a letter to Lady Gregory, Yeats expressed his concern over the outcome. If they lose the case, Yeats writes, "it will give one Crowley, a person of unspeakable life, the means to carry on a mystical society, which will give him control of the consciences of many"(Hutchinson 73). At one point, Yeats even feared that Crowley had thugs on retainer whose job was to maim or slaughter him.

Many of Yeats' reactions to Crowley are, to say the least, overdetermined. As such, they allude to disruptive forces that one would do well to explore. Though one can only imagine Ezra Pound drinking the blood of his beloved cats, a case can be made for animal sacrifice entering into Yeats' views of Crowley. During this time, Yeats referred to Crowley as "a much worse Captain Roberts"(Hutchinson 77), alluding to a magician who had once convinced Yeats to take part in an animal sacrifice. Apparently the affair was so traumatic that Yeats' face "turned to a bilious green"(qtd. in Hutchinson 78), and Captain Roberts became a reverberating image of black magic's dangers. As far as Yeats is concerned, Captain Roberts could well be the first of Crowley's many guises, for Roberts' animal connection puts him in mercurial company. Cats, for instance, have long been associated with transformative abilities. There

are numerous tales in France, for instance, of villagers
cudgeling cats and then finding bruises on a mysterious
woman (i.e. a witch) the next day(Darnton 94). Crowley
shares this property, befuddling Yeats with "any number of
false names"(qtd. in Hutchinson 72). Crowley may call
himself The Beast, but his patron saint is definitely
Mercury, the messenger god of thieves, exemplar of tricky
change. Identified with the Egyptian god Thoth and the
Greek Hermes, he is "rather a sort of *joker*, a floating
signifier, a wild card, one who puts play into play"(Derrida
qtd. in Materer 103). Crowley's joking, carnivalesque
personas definitely run counter to Yeats' more sincere,
hierarchical sensibilities.

Other than witnessing animal sacrifices, in fact,
Yeats' other great fear surrounding Occult practices was the
possible loss of identity(Coote 149). Given the nature of
Victorian and Modernist mediumship, Yeats' fears were not
unfounded. Yeats was a self-professed Occultophile, but
when he felt the possibility of possession at one séance, he
stayed away from spiritualist ceremonies for months(55).
And, despite his extremely dubious reputation, Crowley's
major virtue resides in his almost Nietzschean infidelity to
everything. Christopher Isherwood describes the phenomenon
in negative terms: "The truly awful thing about Crowley is

that one suspects he didn't really believe in anything. Even his wickedness" (<u>The Beast Demystified</u> 7). While intellectual infidelity presents itself as a nightmare to a leftist writer like Isherwood, one wonders to what extent it might be valuable to someone of more right wing convictions. Especially in the context of the inter-war period, one could argue that as much harm was caused by implacable convictions as a complete lack of them. Cultivating a mercurial personal identity would in effect help institute an aesthetics of revision rather than fidelity, an aesthetics that could be applied to politics as well as personality. This is the sort of aesthetic Breton described when he presented Desnos as the most superior of Surrealist mediums not necessarily due to an immense effort or talent, but due to his mercuriality "in the course of the multiple experiences to which he has lent himself" (qtd. in Caws 8). For Yeats, whose most nightmarish vision of history involves watching a rough beast slouch inevitably forward, the self-styled Beast Crowley may prove of use. In all of his practices, including animal sacrifices, The Beast was always sacrificing himself in order to become something else.

Consequently, this chapter seeks to conduct a ceremony with Crowley's costumes (including false names) and cards that could similarly frighten Yeats in a space as transforming as the one Crowley prepares at the close of

Wilson's novel for Joyce, Babcock, and Einstein. Instead of Yeats locking Crowley out of the Vault of the Adepti, this chapter imagines Crowley holding Yeats in this space long enough to shake off the horror film of a predetermined history. The purpose of this technique, with Yeats perhaps more than any of these other figures, will be to surprise him on his own Occult terrain, but in a way that interrupts his more reactionary tendencies. For if Stephen Coote is to be believed, Yeats' mystical tendencies were an unavoidable part of his psychological being. He connects Yeats' early religious melancholia to a history of depression in the family, one whose content was aided by an almost ubiquitous belief in magic in the Irish countryside(17-20). This interest in magic rode a wave of an occult revival responding to 19th-century preoccupations with science and materialism(85), including Yeats' own response to his father Jack's rational skepticism. Thus, while Yeats' Occult allegiances may not have been unshakeable, their rootedness suggests adopting the strategy of Georges Bataille, who reminds us that whatever the religious experience represents in human terms, its power demands that it not be left solely to political exploitation by its most infamous proponent, fascism(Stoekl 932). Fascism's most important lesson, in fact, may be its ability to utilize "advanced marketing strategies to sell itself"(Koepnick 55), a method that

inevitably relies on strategies of desire as well as reason and coercion. Consequently, as Horkheimer and Adorno insist, unequivocal faith in enlightened critique is wholly inadequate to the task of combating fascism and its capitalist counterparts(4). Bataille teaches Marxism about the religious experience what Benjamin taught it about mass culture and mechanical reproduction; these things must be used by the left for political liberation.

The Devil

The Devil, drawn in Yeats' as well as Eliot's layout, actually makes an appearance in "A Prayer on going into my House"(CP 162-3). The poem ends unsettlingly with the Devil breaking the sanctity of Yeats' "tower and cottage" either by cutting down a tree that provided shade or "setting up a cottage / Planned in a government office." Neither one of these acts would hurt Yeats' home per se, but instead would violate the sense of space he associates with it. The home is not just a place to live for Yeats, but an ideology of safety and seclusion, of a separation between "government" and everyday life. Symbolically speaking, this insularity is guaranteed by the cottage, but the tower is a bit more ambiguous. While it may remind one of the "ivory tower" of the academy and the fine arts, it also suggests the mobilization of (phallic) power behind any ideological

vision. Yeats does not want the space of his desires encroached upon, and he is willing to defend it. Any demonized threat to this vision must be manacled "upon the Red Sea bottom," a punishment suggesting not only imprisonment, but bloody violence. The question of the poem's true devils thus remains up in the air.

The devil described by Crowley's tarot deck (despite its three eyes) is actually more like the subject of Yeats' "The Madness of King Goll"(CP 16-18), characterized by blind impulse. In this poem, the King rushes out into the wilderness after a "whirling and a wandering fire" suddenly grows inside of him during battle. Yet, as King Goll spends the rest of his life in rustic retreat merely because *"They will not hush, the leaves a-flutter around me,"* he more resembles Yeats' cottage with "No table or chair or stool not simple enough / For shepherd lads in Galilee" than the devil "A Prayer on Going into my House" excoriates. Thus while King Goll is both mad and blind, these are not necessarily bad traits for the self-described "last Romantic." Instead, Goll puns with "gall" or "goal" to remind us of how Yeats' attraction to escapism expresses itself years later in Yeats' cottage. Strangely enough, Salvador Dali's card in fact condenses these diverse (blind, lordly, escapist, rustic, cosmopolitan, mad, peaceful)

images of the devil. It depicts a naked figure, chasing a butterfly attached to a scepter he holds, about to step off a cliff into blue nothingness. His eyes are covered in shadow, and two shadowy arms seem to be helping to push him over. The retreat to Nature (and all it represents) is shown to be a blind, dangerous impulse that carries the trappings of civilization with it.

Yeats does remind himself, however, of how artificial the return to Nature may be. Despite his prayer for the cottage/tower's simplicity, he warns, "yet should I dream / Sinbad the sailor's brought a painted chest, / Or image, from beyond the Loadstone Mountain, / that dream is a norm." Not only does this dream inject baroque artifice into the sylvan setting, but the double pun in the name "Sin-bad" also suggests a guilty anxiety over what the homestead represents. If Crowley's tarot deck also suggests that the Devil card represents an "irresistibly strong and unscrupulous person," one may wonder to what extent Yeats' ideals, the Devil, artifice, and normalcy overlap into a violent complicity. Once again, the tower takes on a special significance here, as Foucault reminds us that the most powerful and ubiquitous panoptic sensibility operating today is that abstract standard people call "the norm"(201-2).

I have been speaking of this poem as if it were a completely symbolic venture, but the poem (published in 1919) refers to a place Yeats purchased in 1917 and subsequently named Thoor Ballylee. Thoor Ballylee does in fact consist of a cottage and tower, and "was one of the thirty-two defensive towers built by the deBurgo family in the Galway area during the Norman Period"(McCready 391). Roofless and doorless, the place had fallen into disrepair when Yeats acquired it. By the time he and his wife George were able to move in, Yeats' senatorial duties prevented them from spending much time there. When they did stay there, Yeats and George found the place flooded at least once a year and was so damp as to be damaging to Yeats' health. As one can see, the threats Yeats envisions are endemic to the house itself. Not only does Thoor Ballylee have an irrevocable public/governmental history, but it is most threatened by the very nature Yeats views as an idyllic retreat. Consequently, it is as impossible for us to read the poem as pure language as it is for Yeats to avoid reading the material history of the house symbolically. One might recall Pound's depiction of Yeats in the Pisan Cantos, "dawdling around Notre Dame / in search of whatever / paused to admire the symbol"(548). And yet, the fixation of reading too much into things does not belong to Yeats alone. It is also the methodology of materialist and cultural

studies. Since the codes of material culture are often
(though not always) more opaque than alphabetic language,
the science of reading them can be far less exact. Yet, as
Yeats' poetry about Thoor Ballylee shows, the conduits
between language and object can be infinite precisely
because the boundaries between material and meaning are
often nonexistent.

Queen of Cups

Sinbad's "painted chest," if taken to refer to the
human anatomy, also alludes to the poem "Peace"(CP 92) that
imagines a woman artistically represented, presumably Maud
Gonne: "Ah, that Time could touch a form / That could show
what Homer's age / Bred to be a hero's wage." This opening
presents two levels of subjection, an artistic one in
"Homer's age" and a social one in "hero's wage." Either a
woman is contained within an aesthetic representation or she
becomes the end result, the payment, of male labor. This
sort of heuristic parallels Yeats' stormy relationship with
Maud Gonne, a woman whom Yeats felt wasted her beauty and
talents in political causes. Yeats wrote many poems
suggesting, in fact, that he had made the ungrateful Gonne
into everything that she was(Craig 94). While Yeats
criticized Gonne for simplifying complex issues through
means like appealing to the Irish dead(Freyer 15), there is

a parallel simplification in this poem. "Were not all her life but storm, / Would not painters paint a form / Of such noble lines," Yeats asks. Paraphrased, this poem claims that the subject was too stormy to represent in her youth, but not worthy of representing in her peaceful old age. Perhaps one should ironically commend Yeats for introducing the Maud Gonne subnarrative into his poems, as it presents the stakes involved in aestheticizing the female subject. The end results of aestheticizing women in this way are either fascist emotions(Craig 202) or death:

> Were you but lying cold and dead,
> And lights were paling out of the West,
> You would come hither, and bend your head. (CP 92)

The female subject may move after death precisely because she has become a lifeless commodity, an object of exchange. This "traffic in women," Gayle Rubin explains, forms "the ultimate locus of women's oppression" because no matter how desirable women may be, they can not escape their status as objects of exchange(37). Their very life within the system is one of servitude.

And yet, the Maud Gonne narrative also bespeaks a larger tension between aesthetic withdrawal and political involvement in Yeats' early work. On the one hand, Yeats seems to desire for himself the aestheticization he seeks to impose on Maud Gonne. In "The Stolen Child," Yeats narrativizes art as a faery land that opposes "the world"

which is "more full of weeping than you can understand"(CP
19). Yeats continues this mythological opposition in "The
Rose of Battle" by urging the worldly reader to "wage God's
battles in the long grey ships"(CP 38). Consequently,
Yeats' interests in myth, religion, and the Occult should be
viewed in some part as a generalized opposition to the
allegedly mundane world of commerce and politics. With his
life straddling a time that came before and after the
flourishing of the machine age and his allegiance to an
Ireland that was simultaneously ancient and modern, Yeats
found himself both fascinated with modernity and opposed to
it. For Yeats, mass production meant rule by a mass
mind(Stanfield 128), a horror which Yeats sought all means
to avoid. Yeats' art, and I would argue especially in its
Occult dimensions, was one of those aristocratic commodities
designed to oppose the "systems of popular instruction"
overtaking the contemporary world(Craig 160-2).

Yeats' poetic endeavors were therefore a way of
escaping the trash produced by everyday life. While Pound
took industrialization as a cue to "make it new," Yeats
sensed how planned obsolescence was always "making it old."
As a consequence, Yeats added another dimension to the
Shakespearean theme of immortality and writing:

> Of all the many changing things
> In dreary dancing past us whirled,

>To the cracked tune that Chronos sings,
>Words alone are certain good.(CP 7)

Ironically, this opposition of writing to the rest of life uses a metaphor of monetary speculation--a sure bet. This desire for control corresponds not only to the filmic metaphors of Chapter 3, but also to the pathways Yeats' politics took into the 1930s. In "From Democracy to Authority," Elizabeth Cullingford reminds us of "still-troubled Ireland, where restoration of order was a genuine political priority"(67). While Cullingford's attitude may be a bit too forgiving of the means Yeats proposed for restoring order, her approach does have the merit of reminding us of the need for historical specificity in terms like "fascism" and how certain political situations might be more receptive to authoritarian politics. Both Italy and Ireland, for instance, "were obsessed with the need to assert a long suppressed national identity, which in older established nation states could be taken for granted"(Freyer 93). This need in Ireland was strong enough for Germany to consider them a potential ally right up through 1938(Duggan 31). Germans wanted to capitalize on the nationalism, art, and aristocracy which were for Yeats loci of permanence in a commodity culture based on change.

But just as the escapism of art and the engagement of nationalism converge in Yeats' desire for order, there is a

real sense of despair in comparing the permanence of "Words alone" with the momentary changes of the market. One senses that Yeats would like to escape into a dream world and yet feels such a move to be impossible. In "Fergus and the Druid" (CP 32-33) for instance, the king begs to "Be no more a king / But learn the dreaming wisdom that is yours," but finds the wisdom more disillusioning than dreamlike: "how great webs of sorrow / Lay hidden in the small slate-coloured thing." Or in Yeats' Occultic "Phases of the Moon" (CP 163-7), pure imagination can be a frightening or paralyzing state: "When the moon's full those creatures of the full / Are met on the waste hills by country men / Who shudder and hurry by." This poem in fact continues a debate introduced in previous poems between "pure image" and a more grounded reality, perhaps taking comfort in the cyclical metaphor of lunar changes. Lunar cycles answer the debate in a specific way that denies the need for choice, in effect attaining total coverage by suggesting that all combinations of imagination and reality are achieved at some point. As comforting as these cycles may be, they don't take into account the various endpoints and permanencies that may occur within or outside of them. Attempting to carve a sense of agency for himself, the Irish Airman claims,

> Nor law, nor duty bade me fight
> Nor public men, nor cheering crowds,

> A lonely impulse of delight
> Drove to this tumult in the clouds. (CP 165)

While the airman believes that his own, inexplicable dreams
(as opposed to public indoctrination) brought him into the
sky, the end result of death in the armed forces is the
same. He is admittedly driven, and to what extent can a
driven individual ever be sure of what composed the drive?
For does not ideology always attempt to disguise forced
necessities as internal drives?

Ace of Disks

If the Irish Airman chose his destiny by following a
"lonely impulse," then "Shepherd and Goatherd" may very well
be his dirge: "He had thrown the crook away / and died in
the great war beyond the sea" (CP 142). By having the
Shepherd and Goatherd sing earthly and spiritual laments
respectively, the poem asserts the possibility of choice
that the Airman claims as well. The poem refuses to make a
choice, however, when the shepherd recommends laying both
songs on the door of the bereaved. Incompatibly, the poem
asserts total coverage while it laments an unrecoverable
loss. The pastoral setting of the poem also grates against
the modernity of the shepherd who has given up his "crook,"
a word that suggests how the naivete of the setting is
itself a thievery of historicity. In contrast, the beggar
of "Under the Round Tower" (CP 137) does not have a choice

about his position, but instead has a dream about the sun and moon dancing together that implies his position is no different than his neighbors who "sweat and little earn." But perhaps the real difference lies not between the beggar and his neighbors as between those under the tower and those in the tower. For the Yeats who believed in an "organic aristocracy based on land and culture"(Craig 9), political and economic organization oftentimes took on an "us and them" logic. Only in his most vulnerable moments does Yeats suggest that one may actually suffer real loss from lack of choice. In a poem that might prove poignant for any scholar or artist, Yeats claims that if his love had ever listened, he "might have thrown poor words away / And been content to live"(CP 90).

Ace of Wands

In "The Two Trees"(CP 48-9), Yeats contrasts the heart with the cruel external world. As different as these two realms may be, nature in the form of trees runs a metaphorical conduit between them. Consequently, Nature becomes the ultimate standard here, not the inside or the outside. While one could credit Yeats' love of nature to his status as the last Romantic, his interest in eugenics(Stanfield 145-60) makes it likely that he also sought the irrefutable status that scientific discourse held

at the time. Yeats' reference to his fairies as "elemental creatures"(CP 50), in turn, carries a double meaning equally at home in an alchemist's tome and a periodic table. Of course, the Occult has a long history of competing with science, as evidenced in the discourses of astronomy and astrology. Thus, it comes as no surprise that the major Occultic system Yeats describes in the early poems involves correspondences with phases of the moon(CP 164-7).

Of course, there are many documented problems with rhetorical appeals to Nature. To name just two, J.P. Stern documents the Nazi use of disease metaphors to propagate anti-Semitism(39-44) while women's biological differences have been falsely correlated with alleged inferiority. Yeats' love for Eugenics and the organic aristocracy speaks for itself while his problem with the woman described in "No Second Troy"(CP 91) is that she is "not natural in an age like this." In the context of the poem, this unnatural quality retroactively associates with Maud Gonne's political activities, thus suggesting that women should not involve themselves in revolutionary politics because they can only teach "to ignorant men most violent ways." In "The Traffic In Women," by contrast, Gayle Rubin in fact argues that volatile personalities like Maud Gonne's are logical (if not natural) rebellions against their social situations: "the creation of 'femininity' in women. . . is an act of psychic

brutality, and. . . it leaves women an immense resentment of the suppression to which they are subjected"(50). Intelligent men like Yeats, for their part, will go so far as to literally lock Maud indoors to prevent her from engaging in political events(Coote 163).

In contrast to these natural limitations, Donna Haraway in "A Cyborg Manifesto" calls for a machinic rhetoric which is a dream "not of a common language, but of a powerful infidel heteroglossia"(621). There may be ambiguous leanings toward such a Utopia in Yeats' work, as in "The Dolls": "A doll in a doll-maker's house / Looks at the cradle and bawls: / 'That is an insult to us'"(CP 126). The insult may be a cry against nature, but the dolls themselves are questionable works of art since they remind one of the artifice involved in the male construction of female identity. One man's woman may be another feminist's doll. And in this poem especially, nature is suspect, for the final cry is from the doll-maker's wife against her own body: "'My dear, my dear, O dear, / It was an accident'"(CP 127).

Two of Wands

In one of the final poems before the volume _Responsibilities_, Yeats contrasts the popularity of the Galway Horse Races with the lack of enthusiasm for poetry.

While Yeats blames the change on "the merchant and the clerk / [who] Breathed on the world with timid breath"(CP 97), it is apparent that Yeats desires for poetry the mass mind that he sees the races possessing. For Yeats, however, this change in poetry's status must occur with an unpredictable change in the audience: "somewhere at some new moon / We'll learn that sleeping is not death, / Hearing the whole earth change its tune." This passive approach to engaging the popular differs markedly from the attempts of critics like Benjamin who sought to find out what qualities made sports so popular and how various art forms might share them(686). In fact, Yeats' attitude to the populace, especially in Responsibilities, operates with all the vindictive affection of a secret crush. At first, Yeats responds with an unrequited lover's sense of rejection, telling a fellow poet in "To A Shade" to return to the grave because a third poet "has been driven from this place"(CP 110). Yeats at other moments blames such rejection on the lover's bad taste. In "To A Friend Whose Work Has Come to Nothing"(CP 109), Yeats directly equates success with producing shameless lies. The sequence beginning with "To A Child Dancing In The Wind" takes this question of taste a bit further by making his audience a naive child whom Yeats is unable to warn about life because "you are young, / So we speak a different tongue"(CP 122). Yeats seems to use a bit more humility at

the end of the poem when he admits, "I am old and you are young, / And I speak a barbarous tongue," but the word "barbarous" makes it a pyrrhic victory for the child. The pun on "barb" may make Yeats merely the bearer of the world's prickly nature as opposed to an uncultivated speaker. In addition, Yeats' general depiction of the uncultured masses suggests he is merely the bearer of bad and barbarous tidings, not the supporter of them. In sum, Yeats wants to control the popular imagination, as evidenced in his prayer for the Abbey Theatre:

> Is there a bridle for this Proteus
> That turns and changes like his draughty seas?
> Or is there none, most popular of men,
> But when they mock us, that we mock again?(CP 96)

While Yeats seemingly wants to return the masses to tradition, his use of the words "popular" and "mock" suggests an unconscious realization that he may have to, as Walter Benjamin imagines, mock the masses by imitating their tastes.

Teasing out the full implications of these double meanings would require a major interruption in the practices of a Yeats who found himself "constantly urging the despotic rule of the educated classes as the only end to [Ireland's] troubles"(Freyer 106). Not only does such an attitude put power in the hands of the few, but the word "despotic" limits information by suggesting that the "educated" have

nothing to learn from everyone else. Despotism here operates as a more limited form of the paradigms that Thomas Kuhn describes in The Structure of Scientific Revolutions. In this sense, escape from despotism would have to occur in a similar manner to the way in which scientific discoveries are made. Kuhn argues that scientific discourse tends to operate as a game which produces new games, the rules of which are specific enough to allow scientists to discover new anomalies. As a system that proceeds through the awareness and exploration of anomaly, the limitations of scientific paradigms are actually beneficial to new discovery(52-3). While one can't argue with the same vigor about the benefits of despotism, its escape must proceed in the same manner, through the interruption of an anomaly which causes one to question despotic structures. Unfortunately, certain paradigms come armed with defense mechanisms against their change. Sheer force of habit makes people assume a utensil submerged in coffee is a spoon instead of a fork(Ricks 95), and other (albeit essentialist) cognitive tests have been equally dismal about human capacity for change. For its part, the historical avant-garde has always been interested in changing or expanding upon these "human" limitations, and in its own way this chapter's use of tarot cards to help direct and redirect discussion is involved with combatting experiments showing

that people are generally unable to spot anomalies in playing cards(Kuhn 63). Due to the well-documented artistic and economic elitism of Yeats, an exploration of his capacity to be ideologically interrupted should also assume a recalcitrant subject. Yeats even describes the things that have damaged his reputation as "Those undreamt accidents"(CP 128), as if careful planning and the elimination of chance were the answer to questions of ideology. So in the guerilla spirit of the Situationist International(Ball 32), one should search for moments of weakness or mobility in Yeats' work while simultaneously looking for weapons that will make him respond readily, like the squirrel in "An Appointment":

> Being out of heart with government
> I took a broken root to fling
> Where the proud, wayward squirrel went,
> Taking delight that he could spring;(CP 125-6)

The root broken off from its original context, the startled squirrel, both of these things allude to the various forms of collage favored by the historical avant-garde, since collage by its very nature is the "art of interruption" (Ulmer 97). Or as Fredric Jameson states of experimental video in Postmodernism, the "mind's deeper currents need to be surprised by treachery and ruse"(71). Perhaps the lesson of the Frankfurt school and those who work in its tradition, in fact, is that every subjectivity is somewhat recalcitrant

when ideology infiltrates those "deeper currents" which tend to determine a person's political acts in real space and time.

If one of the most significant interruptions that Yeats could undergo would involve more accommodation of the popular imagination, then one investigating Yeats should accommodate the revolutionary possibilities of his tastes as well. Rather than merely classifying as "escapist" his mythological or Occult sensibilities then, one should explore the moments in which these interests may in fact possess revolutionary kernels. As Andrew Ross asserts in No Respect, reaching mass culture must involve the education of desire which inevitably requires the production of pleasure(199). While Yeats himself may have viewed an interest in the Occult as a way of transcending the everyday mind, Ezra Pound had a bit more postmodern sensibility in suggesting that Yeats was more entertained by stories of witches than the poetry of Wordsworth and thus looked to the Occult as a source of pleasure(Cantos 554). By taking a less mocking tone than Pound, however, one may follow Yeats around his phases of the moon to the point where those dark forms "change their bodies at a word"(CP 166). Though Yeats classifies them as creatures who (for the same reasons as Crowley) lack integrity, he also describes them as bats and thus perhaps foreshadows the bats of Eliot's The Waste Land

who three years later (1922) resemble towers moving up and
down the ceilings of a cave, a horrifyingly Utopian vision
of a city that "Cracks and reforms and bursts in the violet
air"(CP 67), a culture always receptive to the "theatrical
environments inside urban spaces"(24) envisioned by the
unborn Situationist International.

Michael Robartes and the Dancer

The tarot cards for *Michael Robartes and the Dancer*,
the volume containing "The Second Coming" whose paralysis
began this discussion, set a selfish and domineering woman
against weakness and abandonment to desire. The gender
differentiations in the tarot deck (and indeed the entire
deck is about different manners of classification) suggest
that the weakness represents Yeats in relation to various
forms of dominance. While this power difference is often
gendered, in a larger sense it reflects a division of labor
that dominates not only the tarot deck and *Michael Robartes
and the Dancer*, but critical practice as well, a practice
that Roland Barthes (hidden in Robartes?) has tried to
unhinge by asserting that one must write from "the position
of the subject who makes something, and no longer [as] the
subject who speaks about something"(289). For his part,
Yeats would do well to translate Barthes' critical
subjectivity into his own writing to realize an active

participation in history rather than watching its slow terrible movements as he does in "The Second Coming." Of course, Yeats has many things to overcome in order to escape the paralysis of the poem. First, the tumultuous events in Ireland that made Yeats call for a more authoritarian government, such as the Easter Rebellion and the British Black and Tan movements, encouraged a desire for clear division between ruler and ruled that would inevitably be stronger than in countries with less apparent violence (Freyer 65-73). In addition, "The Second Coming" also reacts to a World War more immense than anyone could have ever imagined. And perhaps WWI, with its aristocratic volunteers for battles ruled by the machine gun and chemical weapons, symbolized in a very apparent way the individual engulfed in waves of history and technology. At one point it drove Yeats to throw up his hands, asking, "are [political systems] going downstream with the artificial unity that ends every civilisation?"(qtd. in Coote 545).

And yet at times, this same violence calls Yeats to action. In "The Rose Tree"(CP 183) for instance, Pearse insists, "There's nothing but our own red blood / Can make a right Rose Tree," an ending which even suggests the creative potential of violence. In its very title, the previous poem "Sixteen Dead Men" is even more explicit:

> You say that we should still the land
> Till Germany's overcome;
> But who is here to argue that
> Now Pearse is deaf and dumb?(CP 182)

The fact that Pearse speaks immediately after a poem in which he is dead suggests some of the paradoxes and reversals concerning Yeats' sense of political engagement. Since this quatrain differentiates between global and local politics, it may also explain Yeats' paralysis in "The Second Coming" which is definitely transglobal and transhistorical in its sensibilities: "Twenty centuries of stony sleep / Were vexed to nightmare by a rocking cradle" (CP 187). Everything is so disproportionate in this poem, from the panoramic vision to the extreme scope of a single rocking motion, it is no wonder the speaker finds himself motionless. The cradle, in its link to global-historical forces, is reminiscent of the butterfly wings that chaos theorists have popularized.

Yeats' global fears are therefore a matter of the riddling of cause and effect due to the loss of authority, an anarchic state which could even lead Yeats to desire a fascist victory in Spain in order to weaken an oppressive (to Ireland) British Commonwealth. One could consequently argue for the reflexive qualities of "The Second Coming" as easily as for its global focus. The crisis of the poem begins in the second line when "The falcon cannot hear the

falconer" and the chain of command is lost. This crisis
demands the second stanza with its entrance of an even
greater ratio of authority to subservience, a sphinx
surrounded by "shadows of the indignant desert birds."
Perhaps this vision takes the form of a nightmare because
Yeats has not realized the full importance of the fact that
"Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world," a permanent state
of global activities in the absence of a falconer. This
lack of recognition eventually reflected back on to Yeats'
overdetermined relationship to local politics after Ireland
gave up home rule, for as Grattan Freyer explains, "Yeats
was soon to confess to an almost fanatical hatred of those
who, under any pretext, sought to undermine law and order"
(79).

Therefore, when political action does arise in these
poems, it does so under strict rules. In "Easter, 1916"(CP
180-2) people wander about exchanging "polite, meaningless
words" until a tide of events sweeps them out of those
formalities. As far as the direction or duration of
revolution goes, "That is Heaven's part, our part / To
murmur name upon name." Not only does this division of
labor assign value to an unquestionable heaven, but human
agency has been reduced to tabulation. This poem recalls
another counting episode in "The Wild Swans at Coole"(CP
131) where Yeats' tabulation of swans seemingly precipitates

their scattering "in great broken rings." Still, there is a comfort in these classifications that represents the Four of Cups' designation as not only weakness, but pleasure mixed with anxiety. Consequently, the rather banal (in its predictability) sexism in this volume takes on a new significance when placed in the milieu of political activism. For directly after "Sixteen Dead Men" and "The Rose Tree," Yeats places a poem that addresses a female political prisoner:

> Did she in touching that lone wing
> Recall the years before her mind
> Became a bitter, an abstract thing,
> Her thought some popular enmity:(CP 183-4)

The somewhat abrupt shift from emphasizing political intervention to description of a woman in jail for her hardened beliefs is overdetermined on the level of gender relations. Furthermore, if Yeats really felt the situation in Ireland was desperate, it seems odd that he would take the time merely to chide a woman for taking part. More likely, Yeats' poem is interested in the subject for multiple reasons, including not only her status as woman, but her relation to "popular enmity" as well. On the one hand, Yeats laments the way in which one's political views can be cheapened, even completely misinterpreted, by the populace. On the other hand, in order to be hated by the populace, one has to have engaged it in the first place.

For Yeats, whose phoenix boasts, "never have I, now nor any
time / Complained of the people"(CP 151), this engagement
violates the true allegiances of an aristocrat. So both as
woman and as romancer of the populace, the subject of the
poem has violated the codes of Yeats' division of labor.
This is what makes her distressing and necessary at this
moment in the volume, something that must be addressed and
imprisoned.

The poem is overdetermined on one more level as well,
for it ends with a powerful vision of the woman before she
was imprisoned. Yeats imagines her as a bird "sea-borne, or
balanced on the air / When it first sprang out of the nest /
Upon some lofty rock to stare"(CP 184). Once she has been
sufficiently displaced into a natural scene (though Yeats
would consider her political identity a displacement), one
can see Yeats' strong desire for active vigor. One senses a
similar envy in Yeats' invective against "The Leaders of the
Crowd." Though he castigates the empty charisma of those
who can reach the masses, he also acknowledges that "They
have loud music, hope every day renewed / And heartier
loves." Looking back to Yeats' volume Responsibilities with
its envious bitterness towards crowd control, one senses
Yeats' desire for amplification of his own music(CP 184).
In fact, the content and methods of these leaders are
paralleled to Yeats' own in his very critique of them. They

spread the word of "Whatever their loose fantasy invent /
And murmur it with bated breath, as though / The abounding
gutter had been Helicon." The negative references to
Helicon and "loose fantasy" implicate Yeats' own Classical
and Occult interests while the word "murmur" repeats the
same action Yeats recommends in "Easter, 1916." Thus, in
his depictions of political women and popular men, Yeats can
cross the divisions of labor he has originally set up for
his own sense of safety, even if he doesn't realize it. As
dark as <u>Michael Robartes and the Dancer</u> is at some moments,
it does offer Yeats these utopian moments of possible
action.

The Universe

Is it ironic that the Universe card in Crowley's deck
represents not only the essence of the question but also
delay and inertia? Yeats' poem "Byzantium"(CP 248-9)
certainly strikes one as universal in tone, and yet it too
begins with a silencing: "The unpurged images of day recede;
/ The Emperor's drunken soldiery are abed." Whether or not
Freyer is right in equating the "drunken soldiery" and the
British Black and Tans(71), the poem begins and continues
with a retreat from turmoil. As the setting grows calmer it
also grows less tangible, preferring the image and the
miracle to more corporeal objects. But in the fourth stanza

this quiet seems only a gathering of momentum for some
greater rage: "At midnight on the Emperor's pavement flit /
Flames that no faggot feeds, nor steel has lit." These
flames rise into "That dolphin-torn, that gong-tormented
sea," a final stanza critics have thought Yeats accidently
misplaced due to its vigorous, earthly nature(Stanfield
140). The lines "images that yet / Fresh images beget,"
however, tend to contradict this supposition. Yeats' move
into the quiet of night is not necessarily a permanent
escape, but a momentary respite in order to reinvent the
sensual world. In a parallel sense, one may valorize or
revile Yeats' Occultism rather than follow its course back
to something more tangible. This is the delay in the
Universe card, the benefit of the doubt that Yeats deserves
if we are to follow those images undulating among both the
living and the dead.

The Magus

If the image chaos of "Byzantium" is to have a larger
meaning for Yeats, it must connect with the elastic wisdom
represented by the Magus. Without this openness, even
ancestral houses can "stoop to a mechanical / Or servile
shape. . . . some marvelous empty sea-shell flung / Out of
the obscure dark"(CP 200). These lines possess many
discomforting double-entendres that may in the end grant

them the elasticity they need. The distrust of the "mechanical" reminds us of Yeats' preference for organic metaphors which even Elizabeth Cullingford classifies as "dangerous"(75). Yet perhaps Cullingford's forgiving attitudes towards Yeats' politics is part of her own intellectual elasticity, attempting to remind us of the ambiguities of a time when people still knew that Mussolini had once been an "enthusiastic Marxist"(63). Use of the word "servile" brings up another uncomfortable association of Yeats with aristocratic sympathies, but then again no Marxist would want to be classified as "servile" nor would many avant-gardists want to be known as "mechanical" without seriously qualifying the term. Nor would Yeats want to be known to fling things out of the dark even if he has done so on many occasions.

Interestingly, both Crowley and Dali present the magus in extremely uncomfortable poses. Dali's magician is of course Dali himself. Yet what would presumably be an egotistical portrait is undercut by Dali's pose, eyes bulging in fear, elbows held in each hand as if shuddering. He sits behind a gothic cage that narrows at the top, and unattached flames dance between the bars. They could easily be "flames that no faggot leads, nor steel has lit." Crowley's magus is suspended in air, but as if invisibly bound or even crucified. His arms are poised in such a way

as to suggest that he may be juggling the objects that
appear to be floating in the air. He is smiling, but his
face is mask-like. In both Dali's and Crowley's cards, the
elasticity of the magician also implies ambiguity,
ambivalence, and inner discomfort.

So perhaps the sequence title from which "Ancestral
Houses" comes, *Meditations in Time of Civil War*,
characterizes not only the occasion of its writing but the
style of the poems it contains. For though Yeats criticizes
the ossified quality of mechanical houses, his own table
possesses "Sato's gift, a changeless sword, / [which] By pen
and paper lies, / That it may moralise / My days out of
their aimlessness"(CP 202). While the sword's contiguity to
pen and paper could suggest a reminder to politicize art,
Yeats' subsequent description almost completely
aestheticizes it. Aestheticization may help fetishize an
object more than mechanization, but it is also by definition
a form of death. The screaming peacock that ends the poem,
in fact, symbolizes the end of civilization in A Vision(CP
495). But just as one can end civilization by escaping or
ignoring it, one can also mar or change it to something
unrecognizable. Consequently, the sword and its symbolism
wavers between engagement and escape. When the sword is

presented next to the pen and paper, it creates both affinity and contrast.

Yeats' own cottage and tower, removed from the idealistic expectations of his earlier work, is now described as a "tumultuous spot" characterized as much by its "winding stair" as by its less vertiginous bliss(CP 201-2). Yeats even imagines its possible return to the state in which he acquired it, "a roofless ruin that the owl / May build in the cracked masonry"(CP 203). While Yeats imagines this end as a curse, he is careful to provide a new home (even if for an owl) in the wake of the old. He makes a similar move in the subsequent poem "The Stare's Nest by My Window" with the refrain, "Come build in the empty house of the stare"(CP 204). And yet here he introduces another oscillation in the poem, based on the word "stare." This way, the line may suggest a fundamental feeling of blindness, but his exhortation to build in that emptiness is more existential than nihilist. Ultimately, the concept of elasticity invigorates Yeats' work, almost as if in the wear that Yeats sees in his own home he can imagine space for variation and reconstruction in the wake of crisis. It is perhaps in the destruction of his own space that Yeats could revision personal convictions that once seemed implacable. When the fissures of the stone are large enough, they oppose each other into a new nest where the once indignant,

suppressed birds of Yeats can again have a space to be heard.

Four of Swords

This elasticity contradicts the rest from chaos implied by the four of swords, a card that in this arena must always be in danger of representing complacency. Dali's representation of the card, in fact, depicts a figure who has been impaled by three swords while sleeping with his arm over his own. The final poem of *Meditations in Time of Civil War* seemingly rejects the false opposition of action to complacency. Noting his own attraction yet fear of those who cry in rage, "Vengeance upon the murderers"(CP 205), Yeats also rejects the "cloud-pale unicorns, the eyes of aquamarine"(CP 206) because their complacency doesn't stop violence but merely ignores it. And yet the last stanza is truly ambiguous, as it seems to advocate turbulence and incompleteness in "half-read wisdom of daemonic images" as opposed to the comfort of friends' approval. As daemons (rather than demons) are a sort of half-breed in the spiritual world, their position with respect to the politics and mythology previously addressed in the poem is ultimately indeterminate. It is clear, however, that Yeats doesn't look to these images or anything else for a permanent sense of rest. His following poem on the turbulent events of 1919

(and that this poem comes after the early 1920s Civil War
poems reminds us of the rhetorical effect of Yeats'
sequencing) affirms that the soul can only be compared to a
swan "if a troubled mirror show it"(CP 208), and if it
attempts to gain entrance to heaven it may not bring peace
but "wildness, a rage / To end all things"(CP 209). Yeats
doesn't always phrase this lack of peace in such negative
terms, however, and in "Hound Voice" actually imagines a
sort of disinterment where ancient hounds find the speaker
"wide awake to know that the hunt is on"(CP 341). If that
hunt could take the form of a tireless search for answers
yet with a belief in alterable paradigm, Yeats would be well
on his way to avoiding complacency.

In affirming his undead restlessness, Yeats makes
himself a momentary embodiment of the alternate identities I
am attempting to delineate. While Pound may write second
thoughts in a Utopian column of his notebook and Eliot might
find liberating answers in the very things he denigrates,
Yeats performs an intermittent drifting which one can always
desire to redirect. This does not mean that Yeats doesn't
understand the tremendous pull towards various comforting
stagnations, however. When Tom the Lunatic ponders the loss
of his wits, for instance, he wants to rest in the
acceptance of "God's unchanging eye"(CP 269). Or in a more
racist and yet pastoral moment, Yeats contrasts the

meditative silence of Coole Park with places or states
"Where fashion or mere fantasy decrees / [and] Man shifts
about--all that great glory spent-- / Like some poor Arab
tribesman and his tent"(CP 244). These lines position Coole
as an enclave against popular culture and miscegenation, but
do so with the concept of change foregrounded. The world
outside Coole is inferior not only because it changes, but
because it forces one to confront the necessity of change.

For the most part, though, Yeats' poems desiring
ideological rest betray their own limitations. Nowhere is
this more apparent than in the epilogue to Yeats' great
spiritual work <u>A Vision</u>. In "All Souls' Night," Yeats
overtly privileges the spiritual world over the waking world
he characterizes by warfare, but perhaps at the expense of
life and motion itself:

> I need some mind that, if the cannon sound
> From every quarter of the world, can stay
> Wound in mind's pondering,
> As mummies in the mummy-cloth are wound.(CP 228)

It would be a mistake to take lightly Yeats' metonymic and
metaphorical choices in these lines. The cannon image
inevitably associates the political world with unsolvable
chaos while the mummy image suggests immobility and even
death despite Yeats' overt attempts to redeem it for his own
purposes. Still, one need not view this sort of thing as a
rhetorical or poetic flaw so much as an example of Yeats'

unconscious conspiring against his own intolerable views.
It is especially telling that this conspiracy should occur
at the culmination of Yeats' greatest visionary work.

In some ways, this sort of conspiring against oneself
is more important than an open affirmation of an avant-garde
position. As the historical avant-garde matured into a
greater awareness of spectacular and popular culture, for
example, artists and critics became more willing to work
through these things rather than against them. Infiltration
and subversion became more the model than shock and
confrontation. While, as Fredric Jameson notes in
Postmodernism, such incorporation of popular forms or media
can become so extensive as to merely replicate the dominant
ideology(3), to ignore or openly disdain such forms or
technologies will ultimately allow them to take less
progressive paths. A similar danger is what makes Yeats and
other high modernists so interesting, for in following their
questionable ideological practices, one can find not
necessarily the inevitably superior workings of genius, but
the most complex manifestations of the popular mind.

Six of Wands

Therefore, working through and not against popular
forms and new technologies corresponds to a more balanced
view of high modernist prejudices by exploring their

histories and escape routes rather than merely praising or condemning them. This doesn't mean not expressing horror or moral disgust, but exploring those emotions in a way that tempers our final judgments so as to ultimately find blame and possibility in both history and the individual. On a personal level, it means treating Yeats with the attitude he has for an estranged friend towards the end of "All Souls' Night." Although Yeats claims to have thought MacGregor Mathers, one of the founders of the Order of the Golden Dawn, part lunatic and part knave, he also realizes his love for him: "thoughts rise up unbid / On generous things that he did / And I grow half contented to be blind!" (CP 229). Instead of blindness, however, Yeats goes on to praise his industry and courage while speculating on the personality traits that may have made the two figures incompatible. This part of the poem adds another meaning to the phrase "All Souls' Night," putting an inclusive emphasis on the word "All."

Yeats' preference for short (eight lines or less) stanzas and short poems may facilitate a balancing of his most problematic views because he can shift to a new perspective or attitude in each stanza. His sequence of eight poems called "Vacillation" (CP 249-53) tends to thematize this structure. Section VII, for instance, is a six-line tennis match between "The Soul" and "The Heart."

This continues an unresolvable dialogue in the first section between "All those antinomies / Of day and night" and represented in the second section by the (un)natural image of a tree "half all glittering flame and half all green." Section three urges men to accumulate as much as possible only to list several caveats. Sections four and five respectively present a heart lifted with unexpected happiness and weighed down with guilt while the final section ends with the paradoxical greeting, "Must we part, Von Hugel, though much alike." The ultimate dispute between Von Hugel and Yeats mirrors the one impossibility in the poem: unity. Thus, Yeats cannot limit himself to Von Hugel's Christian orthodoxy because "Those self-same hands perchance / Eternalized the body of a modern saint that once / Had scooped out Pharoah's mummy"(252). This section in other words articulates Yeats' need for multiplicity, even in its limited scope. Its specifically religious imagery actually serves the cause of diversity. Because of its history and fervency, religious orthodoxy can be the most universal and pungent symbol of all types of unified thought. As spiritual and Occult as his leanings may at times be, in this case Yeats uses religion as mere image of a larger intellectual stance.

At his best and most vacillating, Yeats sabotages his own stances rather than marching with a more fascist sense

of order and implacability. A correspondent to the New York Times describes the mass ornament of the Nuremberg rallies as a funneling of "a great tide of crimson" into the central point of Hitler: "As he appeared there shone upward from a hidden circle of 150 army searchlights behind the grandstands as many spears of light to the central point above"(qtd. in Stern 73). Certainly Yeats was at times attracted to a similar sense of order, as was the Italian poet Gabriele D'Annunzio, whom Yeats greatly admired. But Yeats also had an ability to undo the conclusions he set forth. Tellingly, his sequence called "Marching Songs"(CP 333-5) plays with concepts of regret and retraction. The first song, for instance, calls for a patriotic remembrance of Irish heroes, but the refrain tells a slightly different tale: "My father sang that song, / But time amends old wrong, / All that is finished, let it fade." One is meant to side neither with the somewhat naive patriotism of the stanzas nor the rather dismissive forgetfulness of the refrain, but instead ponder the complex and unarticulated spaces and hybrids in between. The second poem even further questions order and authority by turning things into a march of ghosts:

> What marches through the mountain pass?
> No, no, my son, not yet;
> That is an eerie spot
> And no man knows what treads the grass.

By attaching uncertainty to military maneuvers in the manner
that Yeats does here, one can see the political significance
that has always haunted the unpredictable windings of
Derrida's deconstructive practices. It also provides
another explanation for Connor Cruise O'Brien's designation
of Yeats' political involvement as more about calculated
punctuation than strong conviction(39). As frustrating as
Yeats' wavering political stances may be (and Benjamin, or
even Marx for that matter, offers similar problems), this
vacillation characterizes a mind experimental enough for
change.

Princess of Wands

Interestingly, the most volatile agents in Yeats' later
poems tend to be women. Whether this phenomenon is due to
the wisdom of old age, healed or lessened feelings about
Maud Gonne, an inherent belief in the hysterical otherness
of woman, or something else entirely is not clear. Some of
the poems do give almost Promethean qualities to these
women, which is simultaneously a compliment and a slight.
Florence Emery, for instance, finds her beauty waning and
thus prefers to leave society and learn "a discourse in
figurative speech / By some learned Indian / On the soul's
journey"(CP 229). These lines implicitly place woman in
relation to beauty first, almost making knowledge both a

perversion and a consolation prize for her. In "Two Songs from a Play"(CP 213) there is the irony of a virgin giving new life to Dionysus by stealing the still beating heart from his body. This narrative of course reminds one of the stereotype of an experienced man wanting to marry a virgin while the theft emphasizes the criminal nature of an aggressive woman. Although Yeats seems to admire this woman, he still couches her act as a threat to civilization: "The Roman Empire stood appalled." Finally, Yeats presents us with another criminal woman in the form of a poet who stows away on a ship, only he entitles it "A Crazed Girl"(CP 303). This condescending title balances against high praise of her daring "No matter what disaster occurred" and awe at her unintelligible paradoxes emblematized by the apostrophe, "O sea-starved, hungry sea." Yeats seems attracted to a poetic woman and yet afraid of her, a sense of unease that can only be explained by the presence of an immanent female power. To confirm this, the very next poem is an address to a real woman poet in which Yeats gives her advice on how to conduct her career. "To Dorothy Wellesley"(CP 304) may exhort her to "Stretch towards the moonless midnight of the trees," but the condescending frame of the whole piece distances women both in age and experience. Yeats' creative sensibilities are provoked by this woman, as evidenced by his image of the "Proud Furies each with her torch on high,"

but haunting this excitement are the unpredictable desires of Herodias' daughters in "Nineteen Hundred and Nineteen" as well as the Dora who prompted Freud to ask, "What does woman want?"

Yeats does grant more leeway when he deals with women as characters. In the "Crazy Jane" poems, for instance, Yeats allows himself and readers to revel in Jane's ability to curse authority. Of a priest who objected to Jane's relationship with Jack the Journeyman, a name that has its own associations with freedom, she openly calls "curses on his head / Because of my dear Jack that's dead"(CP 256). Jane shows an impressive range of human emotion, not only cursing the Bishop but finding enough self control to ridicule him: "The Bishop has a skin, God knows, / Wrinkled like the foot of a goose." This range attests to a vigor that Yeats seemingly doesn't allow to women who aren't somehow distanced by class or insanity. While Yeats depicts her somewhat typically with respect to the importance of romantic love, the abandon with which she approaches it transcends stereotypes as she frankly tells a potential lover, "Take the sour / if you take me"(CP 257). In this poem, Jane strikes one more as a Nietzschean superhuman for whom the "instinct of self preservation is suspended"(548) than as a pining lover. As Jane gets older, she still affirms life with a lusty vigor. When her old nemesis the

bishop callously points out her aging body in order to get her to repent, Jane claims that her present state has much to teach her and finally affirms that fragmentation is necessary for true discovery: "For nothing can be sole or whole / That has not been rent"(CP 260).

When Jane's presence fades out further into the more anonymous sequence "A Woman Young and Old," things grow even more interesting. While Jane's discourse is characterized by its heroically brash nature, this woman replies with a more playful wit and poetic flair. When she is reproved for being seen with a disreputable man, she replies, "his hair is beautiful, / Cold as the March wind his eyes"(CP 270). She very humorously admits to deceiving men in order to satisfy longings her "better self disowns"(CP 271) and even to possibly deceiving herself with the Zodiac. In following poems she is even more playful as she believes the Zodiac again, forgives crimes, and even has the presence to allow a man to dominate her enough to grant a new sort of freedom. Robbed of a name, this woman finally attains the highest distinction that Yeats can give-- the ability to love and talk poetically about it. When she thinks she has found the man she truly loves, she describes a transcendent experience: "I had marked him on his northern way, / And seemed to stand although in bed I lay"(CP 272). She has transcended from a crazy girl to a woman of poetic wit.

The Hanged Man

The Hanged Man implies redemption through sacrifice, but the gender of this sacrifice is more telling for Yeats than usual. Yeats' women tend to gain more voice and identity the less connection they have to real life. The real women in his poems tend to be contained within structures of attraction, paternity, and resentment. In this area Yeats may be more radical in word than deed. He may also be a remonstrance to those who would attempt to avert or mitigate the politics of certain figures by close readings of their poetry. In this chapter and in the dissertation as a whole, I have tried to be open to this critique while still affirming the importance of sketching Utopian politics that emerge in the mentally liberating properties of writing. If discourse of all types didn't have the ability to be more radical than daily activities, there would be no reason to pursue writing as a means to social change. That conclusion is a sacrifice I am not yet willing to make. Instead, I prefer to leave the issue ajar, hanging.

CHAPTER 7
REAWAKENING THE UNBORN: A SÉANCE

I would now like to broaden out from performing a specific Occult practice towards a final image of what any aesthetic experiment is about--awakening previously unexplored thoughts, feelings, or attitudes. One could look at such experiments with the same skeptical hope harbored for a séance. At the very least (and the most I would grant), a séance can be an exercise for producing discourse from a new perspective. Inasmuch as the leader of the séance (let us say Hélène Smith) attempts to assume the voice of a dead individual, she must give up her own identity to transmit the speech of the imagined one. This imaginary constraint can be as complex (for what is more complex than subjectivity) as an Oulipian exercise where an "Oulipian author is a rat who himself builds the maze from which he sets out to escape" (Matthews 41). If any metaphor (not to mention a labyrinthine one) to some extent forces one to take on a new voice, it may be used to expand or change one's political views. To use Jean Baudrillard's terminology in "The Precession of Simulacra," simulating the gestures of a certain reality may eventually blur the

difference between that reality and one's simulation(633).
In order to illustrate the revolutionary possibilities of
metaphor, I would like to examine how the work of Julian
Barnes and Andre Breton at times enacts a literary séance.
While Barnes' postmodern novels History of the World in 10.5
Chapters and Flaubert's Parrot thematize the power of
multiple discourses in Joycean fashion, Breton in Arcanum 17
brings a tarot card to life in order to (despite himself)
interrogate Surrealism's possible connections to feminism.

Before I begin exploring each of these works, however,
I must contrast the rhetoric of séance, which deals with the
creation of simulacra, with the rhetoric of galvanism, which
attempts to gain a biologically limited form of existence.
While the former attempts to move beyond identity by
simulating a variety of practices, the latter attempts to
fix identity into a predetermined code. Galvanism could
thus be viewed as an incomplete or limited form of
automatism. In this context, galvinism is all about
efficiency and scientific authenticity while the séance is
all about faith in the miraculous as Daniel Cottom defines
it, the miracle not as a magical event per se but as the
prime method of self betrayal and disruption of identity(39-
47). As a concept it is thus aligned with the use of the
chance-based techniques of the previous three chapters.
Aligned with Cottom's description of tarot games as a way to

counter the causal brutality of culture(59), all of the techniques in this dissertation are designed as ways to escape the brutality of fixed identity.

The inherent violence of expectation surrounding galvanism is nowhere better stated than in Mary Shelley's novel <u>Frankenstein</u>. In the book, Shelley implicitly critiques Dr. Frankenstein for insisting that his creation resemble humanity. His horror makes itself most blatantly manifest at the instant he first attempts to "infuse a spark of being into the lifeless thing"(42). Frankenstein's use of the word "being" is not innocent, for it carries with it assumptions about the ways in which life must exist. As Frankenstein says in defense of his reaction to the creature, "The different accidents of life are not so changeable as the feelings of human nature"(42). In fact, it is the creature's very resemblance to humanity that makes its deviance all the more intolerable to Frankenstein. When the creature was inanimate, Frankenstein only noted that it was ugly. But "when those muscles and joints were rendered capable of motion, it became a thing such as even Dante could not have conceived"(43).

There are many other hints suggesting that Frankenstein's creature represents an attempt to galvanise a limited human being. Frankenstein's departure for Ingolstadt, for instance, coincides with the death of his

mother, and consequently his desire to create life
inevitably hovers near a desire to "unfold to the world the
deepest mysteries of creation"(33). As he discovers the
secret of animating life, he fantasizes not only about the
possibility of invigorating inanimate objects, but of
restoring what has previously died(39). Frankenstein most
clearly evinces his desire to replace his mother when he
falls into a dream of her after his first encounter with his
creation(43). Frankenstein projects this psychological
desire onto the social realm by correlating his study of
galvanism with a retreat from the world. As he progresses
toward his goal he notes, "the same feelings which made me
neglect the scenes around me caused me also to forget those
friends who were so many miles absent"(40). By setting up
the narrative in this way, Mary Shelley positions herself
ambiguously with respect to the essentialist thought
patterns she critiques. On the level where Shelley
foregrounds the substitution of the creature for other human
beings, she foregrounds the exchange that Frankenstein
unconsciously makes. But on the level where she equates
Frankenstein's galvanism with a loss of belief in nature,
she sympathizes with Frankenstein's own privileging of
nature over simulacra. Reading the novel as a description
of Shelley's own fears of childbirth, reinforced by the
author's reference to the book as "my hideous progeny"

(xxvi), further blurs her identity with Frankenstein. But this sympathy with the positions she critiques only compromises the novel's argument precisely because it attempts to critique the violent social limitations on identity.

In contrast, Frankenstein's official designation of his creation justifies the cruel ways in which he isolates it. When the creature asks Frankenstein to build him a mate, he replies, "Shall I create another like yourself, whose joint wickedness might desolate the world?"(130). While the creature has committed some unfortunate acts thus far, he is careful to say that his hatred of humanity was directly caused by humanity's rejection of him. Conversely, Frankenstein has from the start connected his creature's deviant construction with evil. This designation stems not only from the creature's displaced relationship to Frankenstein's view of humanity, but also from the doctor's desire to control his creations. As Frankenstein perfects his techniques early on, he fantasizes, "A new species would bless me as its creator and source"(39). He desires complete authority through adulation, and is willing to sacrifice everything to attain it. When the creature he animates doesn't meet up with his expectations, Frankenstein describes it as "the wretch whom with such infinite pains and care I had endeavoured to form"(42). This frustration

at labor that unpredictably goes for naught implies, in addition to lament over the final result, the galvanist's more general and abstract disappointment at loss of control. In contrast to the galvanic event and its ideals of outcome, the literary séance attempts in every simulation an abandonment of self.

Part of Frankenstein's control fetish takes the specific form of doing away not only with difference in general, but with women in particular. Imagining the new species he will galvanize, Frankenstein claims, "No father could claim the gratitude of his child so completely as I should deserve theirs"(39). This claim reads like a riddle, the answer to which is that Frankenstein will have so much power because his creations will have no mother to share the credit. One may excuse the doctor for such a desire on the grounds that he imagines the ability to function without his dead mother, but his corollary to do away with all women in creative processes is inexcusable. One may equally desire to excuse a culture that lacks a strong history of feminism for its subsequent misogyny. The point is not to excuse or condemn, but to adequately understand the processes which produce these violences. If a society does not do so, it is apt to find itself pursuing the same logic exposed in Shelley's novel. For inasmuch as Frankenstein seeks the

male *completion* that comes with jettisoning the female, or, more particularly, failing to provide a female to his incomplete creature, he symbolically sets into motion the murder of all women enacted in the eventual death of his cousin bride.

I am interested in looking for ways to open up the possibilities for individuals like Victor Frankenstein who hurt themselves and others in their allegiance to an unchangeable concept of nature. By freeing them of such allegiance, I hope to enable characters like Victor to enact their own admission that the "different accidents of life are not so changeable as the feelings of human nature"(42). Similarly, a character like Eliot who one thought might change into a judicial robe at any moment (Gordon 245) also has the possibility of fading into less judgmental shades. But as this particular novel seems to foreclose any possibilities for Frankenstein's redemption, I turn to another paradigm that tended to set women outside real possibilities of action--Surrealism. The boy's club status of the Surrealist movement and other avant-gardes is well documented, so much so that Susan Suleiman feels no problem in saying that misogyny is a burden that has always haunted the avant-garde(9). André Breton, one of the more sexually conservative Surrealists and yet also the self-professed

leader of the movement, describes (in Arcanum 17) a man's
love for a woman as the most paradigmatic and fulfilling
possibility life has to offer. This viewpoint is not only
somewhat limiting, but Breton's vocabulary betrays the
coercion that may be involved in such love. In doing so, he
arrives at the two most disturbing terms in a gendered
culture, nature and power: "Naturally I am speaking of the
love that *seizes power*"(38). This combination of nature and
power also presents itself in one of the most famous photos
representing the Surrealist movement. Sixteen male
Surrealists, with their eyes closed to represent dreaming,
surround a painting of a naked woman by Rene Magritte.
While this collage alludes to the Surrealists' belief in the
centrality of desire, it does so in a way that literally and
figuratively traps the woman in the center. She may be the
focus of these artists, but she can never really enter into
their radical club. The Surrealists thus make an
interesting test case of the moral quandaries that have most
interested me in this dissertation, since their adventurous
will to experiment comes up against their equally strong
misogynist roots.

Interestingly, Breton comes closest to attaining
feminist sympathies when he embarks on an extended
meditation of a single tarot card. This "lapse" in judgment

may be attributed to the derailing properties of the Surrealist film practice of photogénie, or absorption in the image. There are many descriptions of the practice of photogénie, but they all express related methods and goals. On a most basic level, in photogénie "the focus turned from temporal progression to spatial composition or mise-en-scène"(Abel 107). In novelistic terms, photogénie might turn attention away from plot development towards the individual image. As a Surrealist writer influenced by Surrealist (as well as popular) film, consequently, Breton's novels make an intriguing point of connection with photogénie. Almost all of them, including Arcanum 17, combine a variety of writing methods which either speed or slow the narrative. These methods include the use of photographs, autobiography, scholarly exposition, and imagistic reverie. These latter two methods dominate Breton's descriptions of the Star Card which, visually, "depicts a sky of stars over the head of a naked woman, who is pouring water from two urns, one emptying into a pool and the other onto land"(Rogow 21). The woman's nudity makes her a questionable symbol of feminism when elucidated by Breton, but the duality suggested by the two urns perhaps combines with this nudity to describe the problematical success that accompanies any attempt to take a more radical stance than one has previously assumed. The point to be

made is that Breton's meditation on this card allows him the
opportunity to articulate a certain type of feminism, which
in itself is as magical as any experience with a fortune
teller. I would further argue that this transformation is
to some extent made possible via the novelistic form Breton
experiences here. In his meditation on the tarot card,
Breton practices a sort of photogénie as the "magical" part
of the "crossroads of magic and positivism" that Robert Ray
designates as characterizing cinema(<u>The Avant-Garde</u> 67).

The narrative in <u>Arcanum 17</u> is told mainly through
summary and allusion and could be characterized as "the
state of the times" during Breton's WWII exile.[1] In the
section of the book dealing with the tarot card, one of the
issues of the times concerns the position of women in
culture. Breton acknowledges the need of women to discover
their identities despite the obstacles men may have lain in
their path. Woman must "learn to recognize herself through
the hells to which she is doomed by the view that man, in
general, has of her"(60). This statement must inevitably
include the rhetorical structurations that Breton will make
of the female subject in this book and elsewhere, but he is
to be credited with the caveat that alludes to his own

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[1]Recall Robert Desnos' prediction of this exile discussed in
Chapter 1.

limitations and the ultimate responsibility women have in developing their feminisms.

Breton first invokes the mythical figure of Melusina in order to discuss his version of feminist critique. Because Melusina was condemned to only be part (one might substitute the word "limited" for part) human, she is a fitting symbol for Breton of the ways in which men have limited women's roles and identities. But Breton reclaims Melusina's very limitations as a model of new multiplicity and experiment; specifically, her lack of human legs becomes a strength: "The snakes of her legs dance. . . the birds of her legs drape. . . .Melusina with lower joints of broken stones or aquatic plants or the down of a nest"(62-3). Breton next infantilizes Melusina by desribing her as a child-woman(Rogow 20), but his pyrrhic compliment reiterates the original brokenness and duality of what she represents for Breton as a man critiquing sexism. Melusina is a symbol of the doorway between viewpoints, of being two things at once, a status that continues when "she has reclaimed the empty frame"(66) and merged with Breton's discussion of the Star Card.

When Breton claims, "All the magic of night is in the frame"(67), he alludes directly and indirectly to several things. Literally, he is referring to the frame of the tarot card which he describes on the following page. The

card is filled with starflowers, an image of the rebellious
Lucifer, and a woman who "now is all womankind"(68). The
presence of Lucifer is important, as noted in Chapter 2,
because he stands for ideological heterodoxy, a symbol of
the process "when the machine of the mind goes so fast that
it jumps the tracks"(68) of path-dependent thought. In this
case, both Lucifer and the card symbolize for Breton "that
hidden little bell that summons extraordinary rescues"(69).
Breton thus assigns a redemptive power to the card that I
have tried to enact through the dissertation, for the
untaken paths and ghostly images of the poets I have looked
at have been nothing other than an attempt to suggest the
possibility of rescue from any ideological position. Both
Breton and I have scanned the cards looking for the place at
which the butterfly turns, a change of direction that
"always takes place just in time"(78). With an eye to the
ornament of the letter itself, Breton notes that the
butterfly's wing forms the capital letter R in the word
Resurrection, but as a whole the simulation of a séance is
even more radical. For ideologically, its invocation of the
dead can give birth to what never existed. This is the
second meaning inherent in Breton's suggestion that all of
night's magic is contained within the frame. For the avant-
gardist believes, in an almost alchemical fashion, that any
enlightenment may appear within the momentary frame of an

aesthetic experiment. That is the paradoxical creativity inherent in avant-garde optimism and the logic of the séance which destroys the authority of former points of view by simulating new ones. In contrast to galvanism which seeks to preserve or animate a preconceived notion of life, the séance proceeds with the destructive optimism of the bird who, "attacking his own heart with his beak. . . only succeeds, to his supreme amazement, in enlarging it"(82). The bird could take the form of the Ibis, the god of writing.

This form of ideological multiplication need not occur in such mystical contexts. The novelist Julian Barnes, for instance, who publishes bisexual detective novels under a pen name, has come up with two novels that especially foreground the importance of changing perspectives in the process of research. To begin, <u>Flaubert's Parrot</u> interrogates literary biography by discussing Flaubert from a different perspective in each chapter, including such odd approaches as a bestiary, a dictionary, and an exam. I would like to focus, however, on the chapter entitled "Louise Colet's Version" because it most closely resembles the concepts of literary séance I have introduced here. First, the title reminds us that there never is a story, only versions of a tale, and secondly, it emphasizes the importance of a female perspective. Formally, the story

starts with Louise speaking in the present tense, thus
emphasizing the notion of reinvoking the past. But in
giving her version, Louise is convinced that someone will
burn her letters so that she will be vilified as "the woman
who briefly threatened to interfere with the writing of the
books which [people] have enjoyed reading"(152). This
reference to burned letters alludes to an earlier section of
the book where Geoffrey Braithwaite (the narrative
consciousness of the novel) is horrified when someone who
claims to have some of Flaubert's letters has burned them
out of respect. Thus, Louise leaves us not only with the
sense of lost documents, but the more hopeful feeling that
her chapter somehow constructs a certain kind of truth that
functions in the absence of evidence.[2] She is a specter in
the Derridean sense of the word, returning as if arriving
for the first time(10).

But most importantly, Louise represents the invoked
perspective of a literary séance designed to interrogate
Flaubert's misogyny and the complicity of his readers. In
the opening pages of her narrative, Colet reminds readers
that she is an independent woman who, as Flaubert fans have

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[2]Barnes in fact seems fascinated by missing or destroyed
evidence whenever he writes in the historical mode. See,
for instance, his focus on a painter's use of Bitumen in
History of the World in 10.5 Chapters(139) a chemical which
provokes the decomposition of the artist's own work.

tended to forget, was a poet of some renown. Since Flaubert was quick to criticize her style for posterity's sake, she speaks of his own limitations as a novelist. That she criticizes him for a lack of poetic ability may seem unfair to the writer, but she also critiques him on more novelistic grounds: "Did he understand women at all? I often doubted it"(144). These are harsh words for someone whose most famous book is <u>Madame Bovary</u>. But in the context of a novel in which Braithwaite fetishizes Flaubert to the point of sublime ugliness, Colet's interrogation represents more of a balancing act than an attempt to dismiss Flaubert. Colet's harshest criticism is that "he feared love; and he turned this neurosis into an artistic creed"(150). But even this critique ends up sounding like Nietzsche's claim that all philosophy has been "the personal confession of its author and a kind of involuntary and unconscious memoir"(13), especially in a book as playful as <u>Flaubert's Parrot</u>. And as for the validity of Louise Colet's version, she admits, "I only speak from observation; yours may be different" (137).

The problem with accounts of Flaubert involves his control over his own literary history. This desire for control also manifests itself syptomatically in Flaubert's relationships with women. As Louise Colet puts it, "It was not simply terror that I might invade his study and his

solitude; it was terror that I might invade his heart"(147). But Julian Barnes presents another control freak in his novel <u>History of the World in 10.5 Chapters</u>, one who, if it can believed, has even wider ideological implications. The woodworm who narrates the first chapter presents Noah as someone with "no flexibility of mind at all. Only saw one side of the question"(21). This lack of flexibility comes from Noah's devotion to God, a reverence the worm labels "a bit sinister." Like Louise Colet in <u>Flaubert's Parrot</u>, the worm here acts as a constructed countervoice, the dominant tale's subversion in the form of a new perspective (this one even more closely resembling the Oulipian rat) invoked by the author's imagination. But where Louise Colet operates as a specific critique of misogyny as it relates to dominance, the woodworm's perspective in relation to the mythological significance of Noah suggests a critique of historical myth-making at large.

The creativity of the séance lies in the production of knowledge from a state of impossibility. In that sense the séance is not only related to the Surrealist practice of photogénie but of irrational enlargement which consists of asking questions about objects (be they art objects or otherwise) that extend beyond the categories by which they are normally analyzed. Barnes alludes to this practice in other terms when he discusses the art of fabulation, which

he defines as making up a story to cover facts one doesn't
know or can't accept(109). In Surrealist terms, irrational
questions (such as, "where in a person's character does the
ocean lie?") are impossible to answer with any sense of
certainty but instead call for one to extrapolate based upon
one's initial impressions of the object(Jean 298-300).   In
the case of Louise Colet, this impossible state comes from
the lack of textual availability suggested by burnt
documents. Colet's erasure testifies to a culture defined
by patriarchal worship of the male genius while Barnes'
invocation of Colet exposes such practices. As for the
woodworm narrative in Barnes' History, the choice of that
point of view inevitably carries connotations not only of
humility but of infiltration and surveillance. While other
stowaways were being put to death, the woodworm reports,
"One of the ship's carpenters carried us to safety, little
knowing what he did"(9). By stowing away in a system it has
been banned from, the woodworm is able to report on the
properties of not only a closed ark, but of a closed
history.

In many ways, the ark described by the woodworm
resembles the closed Hollywood sets and systems described in
Chapter 3. The ark is literally a tight ship with
precautions such as "double-peg locks, stall inspections,
[and] a nightly curfew"(4). Outwardly, this security is

designed to prevent the cheetah from springing at the antelope, but it recalls Bazin's overdetermined use of the predator-prey metaphor in his discussion of widening the filmic screen to prevent the control implicit to montage(50). Consequently, the ship's enclosure has wide ideological implications even as the ship's literal manacles manifest themselves in countless other ways. The woodworm specifically points out the Naziesque discrimination in beauty contests that decide which species live or die and in arbitrary designations of clean versus unclean animals. Ultimately, Noah behaves like a xenophobe whose "horror of cross-breeding"(20) leads him to acts of extreme violence. He literally consumes variety, eating animals with such lack of discrimination one senses a desire to do away with difference by consuming it: "you can't imagine what richness of wildlife Noah deprived you of"(14). The woodworm even further emphasizes the loss of possible knowledge in its assertion that many animals we now consider mythological were really just casualties of Noah's regime on the ark.

The worm's narrative, embittered among other reasons because Noah only used one kind of wood/food in his ship (30), thus finally warns us of the political consequences to limiting narratives of the past. The worm tells us of the other arks that were erased from the narrative of the world's destruction and recreation(5) and of the raven who

was vindictively written out of history for the benefit of
the dove(25). If the woodworm seems a bit too paranoid in
his retelling, he is still definitely an antidote to a human
species that is "so hopelessly dogmatic"(25). For the
woodworm is not only a constructed information-generator
that points out the artificiality of any individual
perspective but also a corrective that eats up a church
grown wicked(68). As an inarticulate object made to speak
in a sort of literary séance, it is both mechanical and
occult, subversive and affirmative, dead and living. Eating
through the solid wood of the ark's construction and looking
through telescopes of its own creation, the worm reminds any
reader of the ideological possibilities of eating against
the grain. If the Cabalists looked for the unifying force
in all creation or the alchemists for the philosopher's
stone, the woodworm and the mechanical Occultist (whatever
their objects of study) move in the opposite direction,
fragment the prism into a new rainbow.

APPENDIX

THE FUNCTIONS AND RULES OF DIVINATION GAMES

In the dissertation, I used the I-Ching and the Tarot deck to help direct my individual chapters on Ezra Pound, T.S. Eliot, and William Butler Yeats. There are several elements of these games I found helpful in my study. First, by placing artificial restraints on the particular image clusters analyzed, the games forced me to think in patterns I would not have ordinarily chosen. Secondly, the multiple, unpredictable combinations implicit in each game ensured that I would not know in advance exactly what those restraints were. For the I-Ching, there are 64 major hexagrams that may result from each set of 6 tosses. Each of these tosses may in turn present a "line of change" which modifies the overall meaning of the hexagram. The number of possible combinations of the I-Ching alone is thus 64 x 6 x 5 . . . x 2. With the very simple 15 card tarot reading I performed for both Eliot and Yeats, there are 78 x 77 x 76 . . . x 63 combinations possible.

In addition, there are numerous ways in which one may combine a particular element of each reading with a particular image or image cluster within the poetry. This

number is so great that one may argue that the mathematical probabilities discussed in the previous paragraph are a superfluous addition to the variety already possible with various methods of arbitrary combination. Book-length studies could rely almost solely on the method of arbitrary combination. For instance, I would like to like to conduct a study of the journal form in 20th-century Poetry that analyzes poems in relation to the almanac or <u>The Oxford Book of the Year</u>.

Of course, these methods are deliberately tangential to the topics I am addressing (automatism and conservative politics in this case--contingency versus identity theories in the journal book). Thus, their very virtues are inextricable from their properties of distraction. In this sense, I am thinking somewhat in terms of Benjamin, but primarily in terms of Roland Barthes' interest (in his autobiography) in "the subject's voice *off*, as we say, off-camera, off-microphone, offstage"(73). Thus, by incorporating a game's rules and images, I hope to distract in such a way as to allow more "voice off" communication, more deviations from my own official authorial voice. These methods literally force me, at least for a bit, to focus my attention away from my own preconceived answers and towards the fulfillment of the game's/restraint's rules.

In addition, the games provided a way of structuring the chapters. For the Ezra Pound chapter, I applied one randomly tossed I-Ching hexagram for each canto I analyzed. Then I looked for elements in the canto that corresponded in some way to the toss. These connections may relate to other cantos, Ezra Pound criticism, or literary theory, but the poem itself was the starting point. In both the Eliot and Yeats chapters, I performed separate 15-card tarot readings. Whereas this type of reading tends to divide into past, present, and future, I used my readings to refer to a textual designation of past, present, and future. In the chapter on film, I located crises in both Eliot and Yeats in two specific volumes, The Waste Land and Michael Robartes and the Dancer, respectively. In each case, these volumes were analyzed with the three cards designating the "central nature of the issue." Those volumes written afterward were analyzed with the six cards relating to the future while the volumes written previous were analyzed with the six cards relating to the past.

These were the basic rules, which I expanded on as need and as interest suited me. In both cases, I brought in references to the artwork on the tarot cards in addition to their various "meanings." Also, in the Yeats chapter, I found myself wanting to analyze cards individually as opposed to the more clustered approach used in the Eliot

chapter, though I still kept all cards in their predetermined domain.

In all cases, though especially in the Eliot and Yeats chapters, these games provided me with a method of rereading the texts. They determined the sections which I would have to incorporate into my discourse, but in doing so they also led me to unlikely sections or provided me with new takes on my favorite passages.

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I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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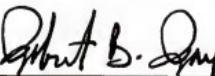
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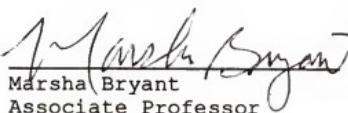
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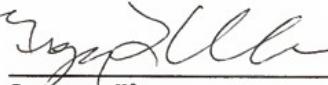
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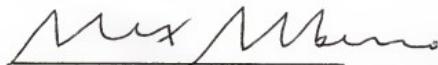
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